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# AND OFF

BY

ANTHONY F. WILDING

LAWN TENNIS CHAMPION, 1910, 1911

WITH FIFTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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1912



TO  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER  
TO WHOM  
I OWE EVERYTHING



## PREFACE

**I**F it is the rule to offer apologies for writing a book about one's favourite game, and its auxiliary diversions, I must break it. Most of my notes were made in slow Scandinavian trains or in journeying between London and Manchester ; and though I am not of a literary turn of mind I can truthfully say that compiling them has given me genuine pleasure.

Of course it is difficult to teach lawn tennis by the written word, but I venture to hope that all those in the early stages of proficiency will be able to formulate ideas which will improve their game.

I am greatly indebted to my friends, Mrs Larcombe and M. Gobert, who have been good enough to make valuable contribu-

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tions. Having played chiefly with men, I know too little about ladies' play. Secondly, being a New Zealander, I do not know as much about the remarkable development of the Young French School as M. Gobert.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Mr Wallis Myers, who has been good enough to edit this work for me and to give me the benefit of a vast experience, and who has further afforded me great assistance in the arrangement of the photographs and the subject matter.

ANTHONY F. WILDING

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ON THE COURT AND OFF

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# ON THE COURT AND OFF

## CHAPTER I

### STROKES IN THE MAKING

**I**N no other game with which I am acquainted has there been such development in the mode and style of play as in lawn tennis. A Rip Van Winkle would rub his eyes and wonder whether it were really the same game that he had learnt some thirty years ago. The old style of gently lobbing the ball over the net into the middle of the court is, among those who consider themselves tennis players, as extinct as the moa.

Two of the alterations most marked are increased pace and volleying. Volleying is now a necessity even for the average player. The American service has done much to develop volleying; it has encouraged

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players to approach the net more frequently. Nevertheless the exaggerated type of American service is gradually dying a natural death ; and rightly so. The more break a player imparts to a delivery the slower must be the service.

Nor is this all. An excessive break service involves a certain amount of contortion, of departure from an easy natural swing. The result is not only a loss of valuable time in recovering poise, but the cumulative effect of the strain is bound to be felt on the general tone of a man's game. The greatest swervers in cricket can only bowl successfully for a limited period and with conditions favouring them ; they have to be relieved, to be given a chance to recuperate. But a lawn tennis player has to go on serving throughout the match and unless he can obtain relief by using a less tiring delivery he may find his service quite innocuous in the fifth set. Nothing encourages a player more than to find that the devil has gone out of his opponent's service. It is a welcome signal of distress run up

on the other side of the net. Therefore I counsel beginners to select and perfect a service that does not tie the body up or impede the subsequent stride to the net.

Then there is this point to remember. On a court that has an even surface, and against a player possessing good ground strokes, a slow service, even if it breaks as much as two yards, presents no difficulties. The service which generally produces the best results is one that is medium paced, well placed, and has just the amount of devil necessary to keep your opponent guessing where it is likely to pitch and what it is likely to do. As at cricket, a little spin and a little break are of great importance—but there should not be too much. That only detracts from speed.

I have in mind the service of Norman Brookes. He has lately come to the conclusion that excessive break is a mistake. At present his service is accurately placed (an impossibility with an exaggerated break), fairly fast with plenty of spin, and very cleverly varied. I would specially em-

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phasize the advantage of varying your service, and placing it so that your opponent has to alter his position to take it. An experienced cricketer knows the value of continual changes of bowling when batsmen are getting set. Let the server bear that in mind. To indifferent men and ordinary lady players big breaks may present insurmountable difficulties. But give me an opponent with a stereotyped slow break service; it is a service to hit and score from.

Another point to remember in serving is to hit the ball from as great a height as possible. If the ball leaves the racket at a high altitude it will result in a very much faster service, and there is more room for placing. I remember once playing tennis in Spain. My Spanish friends were very fair players; but directly a service began to bend ever so slightly any further effort on their part to take the ball was quite out of the question. On the other hand, give A. W. Gore a slow bending service and the result is entirely different.

Holcombe Ward came over to Wimbledon with the American international team in 1906. He was then the foremost living exponent of the American service, and a magnificent volleyer. In fact, he could make a ball "talk" more than any player I have ever seen. He was matched to play S. H. Smith, the "forehand drive man," in the Davis Cup challenge round. Over this tie much discussion waxed in tennis circles. "How is Smith going to take his service? Ward makes it break on to his backhand," was the question heard everywhere. But those who pictured him in sore distress had forgotten two things—first, that Smith was once a good half-miler—a fraction of a second sufficed for Smith to convert a backhand into a forehand stroke; and, secondly, that Smith never takes his eye off the ball. How many of us, by the way, can say the same?

The contest resulted in an absurdly easy victory for Smith by three sets to love. Two points are, I think, emphasized. The first is that a slow service with excessive

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break can be literally "buried" by a man possessing a forehand drive like Smith. The second is that Ward had not sufficient pace or accuracy of placing to serve on to what was really Smith's backhand, although he executed his own style of service to perfection.

Severe ground strokes, I repeat, will always repel a jumping service, if the jump be systematic and honest. But the ability to hit right through the advancing volleyer must be present. When H. L. Doherty—certainly a better player than Smith, but lacking severe ground strokes—played Holcombe Ward in 1905 five sets were necessary before victory rested with the Englishman. Doherty had to rely for success on the sustained accuracy of his own game and the weakening of Ward's volleys by a loss of stamina, a loss which prevented him, after two sets, from obtaining a winning position at the net. That leads me to the point that a fine American service, even if it is supplemented by punitive volleying, is not enough in itself. It may win a two-set match by the

force of its own brilliancy, but the eclipse is bound to come in a long contest, and then, unless a man has ground strokes to fall back upon, by the use of which, so to speak, he may keep his fires alight and wait for the chance to put on full steam once more, the engine will cease to work and defeat will only be a matter of time.

How a player could nearly but not quite win five-set matches with a swerving service and lightning volleys is well illustrated by the case of Karl Behr. A member of the American Davis Cup team of 1907, he was one of the most brilliant players I have ever seen. Not content merely to return a volley, he invariably won or lost the ace on sight. He has done the hundred yards in level time and his pace enabled him to arrive at the net almost as soon as his service had pitched. But, like all players of his type, he had lapses of extraordinary weakness. He had a fine service with a certain amount of work on it; and he volleyed, as I say, whenever possible. His volleying was very hard,

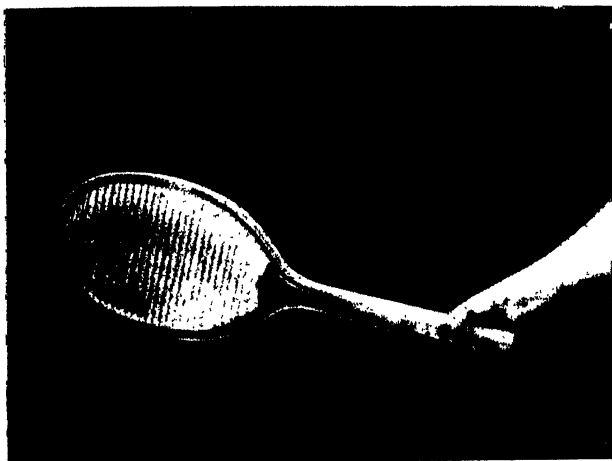
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more hit than the ordinary volley stroke. He had a clean and very severe forehand drive and a swinging backhand stroke. But these were apt to be uncertain. That uncertainty was doubtless due to the fact that his ground strokes were only incidental weapons of attack. More practice with them would have made them surer and of primary importance.

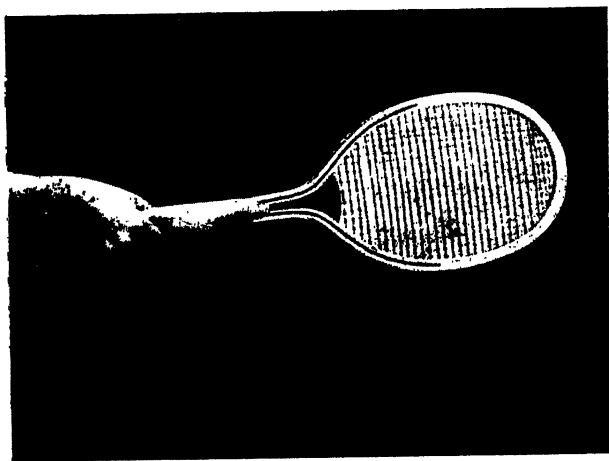
On his return to America, Behr seemed to drop right out of the first flight. Yet in his day, and judging by his form in England, Brookes and I both considered him as good as Beals Wright.

With regard to grips there is undoubtedly a right and a wrong way to do everything. But a player has to execute strokes in so many different positions, and in so many different ways, that one stereotyped hold of the racket cannot be too strongly condemned. Watch Norman Brookes closely for a few games, and you will see that he uses an infinite variety of grips. Again, Gore, Decugis and Brookes all have splendid forehand drives ; but their strokes and grips all

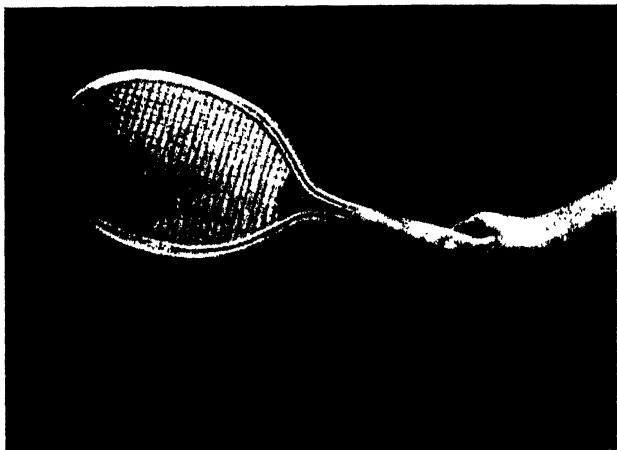




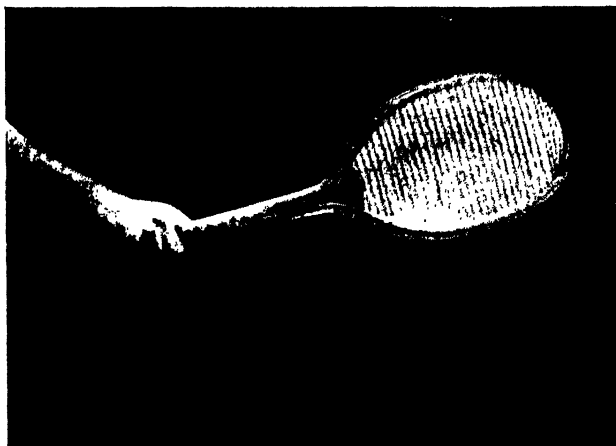
FOREHAND GRIP SHOWING FINGERS



FOREHAND GRIP SHOWING BACK OF HAND



BACKHAND GRIP SHOWING THUMB UP HANDLE



BACKHAND GRIP SHOWING BACK OF HAND

differ, in less or greater degree. Lawn tennis is essentially a game in which each player must have individual peculiarities.

For the man who says that only one grip is right and all the others are wrong I have little use. Dynamical essays and diagrams which affect to demonstrate the futility of that hold or the absolute perfection of this only bore me. I've played against too many players in all parts of the world, players who employ distinctive grips and make fine shots with them, not to realize how absurd it is to be dogmatic in this matter.

Two illustrations are given: (1) of a grip for a forehand stroke, and (2) of a grip for a backhand stroke. From a lengthened experience they appear to me the best; but much depends upon the style of each individual player.

Leaving out S. H. Smith and A. W. Gore, the English players appear to lack the severity essential to a good forehand drive. In this respect the Colonial player seems to me better equipped. It may be that the

Colonial grip is better. But the backhand stroke generally in vogue throughout Australia and Maoriland is not only weak, but is taken in quite the wrong way. Among the rank and file of English players—the university and county teams, for example—you do not find strong forehand and lamentably weak backhand play combined. On the contrary, the backhand is generally quite as effective as the forehand stroke. This is not the case in Australia. The majority of Australian players have a backhand stroke which is likely to score an ace outright. But can these strokes be relied upon at a crisis, or can a steady safe shot be made when occasion requires?

The English players take their backhand strokes with the opposite face of the racket to that which they use for executing a forehand stroke. This is contrary to the common practice in Australasia. Another distinction is that the English players, in taking a backhand stroke, endeavour to keep the head of the racket as high above

## STROKES IN THE MAKING II

the wrist as possible. The Australian generally allows the head of the racket to remain low, swinging at right angles. Loss of control is often the result.

H. A. Parker of New South Wales plays his backhand shots in the English orthodox fashion ; and this particular stroke of his appears to me to be a very excellent model. He can place it equally well across the court or down the line and can conceal the direction until the last moment. Horace Rice has one of the most effective backhand strokes I have ever played against ; but, although it is such a deadly weapon in his hands, I do not think it is a stroke to be recommended as a model for the ordinary player. Nearly all the English players of any note have made a practice of running their thumb up the handle in taking a backhand. This acts as a guide and support in executing a stroke.

The late R. F. Doherty imparted a tremendous amount of top spin to his backhand strokes. In fact, his backhand shot in

effect was not unlike the average Australian's forehand drive. There can be no doubt that the grip of the racket has to be changed considerably in executing a backhand and forehand stroke. Baddeley advocated a fixed grip, but every player of international rank makes the change, even if that change be slight.

Position of the body in making the strokes is a very important matter, seldom receiving proper attention from players. Correct movement of the feet is just as essential as correct movement of the arms. In executing a forehand stroke the left leg should be forward and the body facing sideways—that is to say, the left shoulder should be pointing to the net. In executing a backhand the position is reversed. But while good style is desirable, efforts to gain it should not be carried to extremes. Nature must come first. When running fast for a ball under uncontrollable circumstances the stroke may have to be taken in a position which does not flatter physical symmetry. The camera has proved that again and

again. Latitude must be allowed for the peculiarities of each player. Therefore I hesitate to pose as a model for others.

The accompanying pictures show how I play my forehand and backhand drives, and it would be affected modesty if I did not commend them.

Try imaginary strokes in the two positions before you attempt to hit the ball. The foundation of a backhand drive may be laid before a looking-glass. After you've swung the racket my way, go back to your own ; then determine which feels right. If, after these preliminary trials without the ball, you come to the conclusion that your former style of play is cramped, and needs revising on the lines indicated in the picture, don't imagine it is an easy matter to change. I know from personal experience the trials that lay ahead, the need for daily practice, for perseverance and, above all, for patience. When I decided to change my backhand—to Anglicize it, so to speak—I had to submit myself to a rigid course of self-discipline. I had been used to hitting my backhand

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drives with the same face of the racket as for forehand drives and it was some weeks before I could even accustom myself to the changed grip and the lowered elbow. I found the wall of a wide room an excellent medium for subjugating myself, and I spent many an unexciting hour hitting the ball on my left wing. At first I worked at the ground stroke, blazing away until the cover of the ball almost began to peel, then I started in to develop the new backhand volley. And I found the wall training, apart from the fine exercise it gave, a much more effective method of stroke practice than match play.

Attention to vital points is necessary if a good and complete stroke is to be executed. One conceives the movement taking place before the ball is actually hit. This can be short and snappy, a very bad movement, or it can be long and sweeping, which is ideal. It follows that the racket must be drawn well back. When the stroke is once commenced a steady swing without the slightest halt or hesitation



## STROKES IN THE MAKING 15

should be maintained until well after the point of impact. Both the "follow through" and "keep your eye on the ball" are as important to the tennis player as to the golfer.

As a general rule, it is better for the beginner to hit the ball with the full face of the racket. If an attempt is made to impart top spin at first the result will probably be a loss of freedom and a cramped style difficult to eradicate. But I am in favour, as confidence increases, of putting on a little top spin on both forehand and backhand drives; it helps to control the ball. But top spin is like an explosive: it must be handled with discrimination. Nothing causes more wild or erratic play than its excessive use. Therefore my advice is: get into the habit of hitting the ball fairly and truly in the middle of the racket, with just a suspicion of top spin until accuracy has been acquired. Then the player will soon learn for himself how much spin suits his shot. First accustom yourself to hit cleanly on both sides.

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There can be no question as to the value of top spin for ground strokes. A top spin drive can be hit much harder than an ordinary straight drive and still be kept well inside the base-line. It is also a much more difficult ball to volley, owing to its sinister habit of dipping. Another advantage is that it travels on faster after pitching. In an exaggerated top spin drive you are only using a fraction of the hitting surface of your racket, and the pace the ball travels in the air will be proportionately lessened.

I do not agree with the cut stroke. Its disadvantages far outweigh its advantages. A cut stroke has a tendency to fly out ; it is also easy to volley ; and the loss of speed on the ball gives your opponent more time to effect a recovery. A few players employ it with success, but for all-round efficiency those players would have been more successful with a straight or top drive. Gore and Smith both drive with nearly straight rackets, the second putting on more top than the first. Larned, Brookes, Alexander,

Decugis and nearly all the leading modern players adopt top. Doherty used a fairly straight racket, and, though superbly accurate in his ground play, did not possess the severity of these latter-day players. "H.L.," however, was very severe as well as accurate in dealing with anything on the fly. R. F. Doherty's backhand was as near perfection as any I have ever seen. It was very hard, very accurate and always deceptive. I think it stood fifteen above all other strokes possessed by the famous brothers. "R.F." seemed to know exactly how much spin to give the ball.

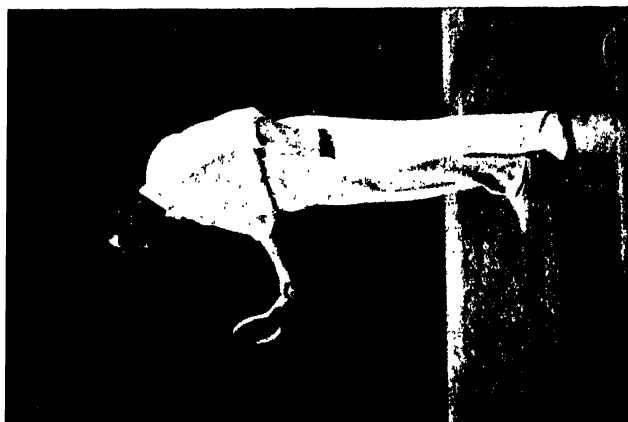
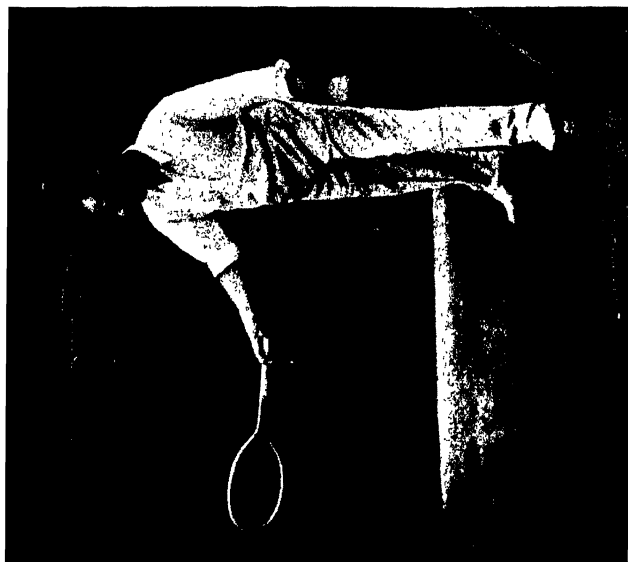
Of the players putting on cut possibly Beals Wright is the best. But it has been Wright's endurance, daring volleying and magnificent service that have made him victorious in many a famous match. It has not been his ground strokes. As long as he keeps back Wright is little better than a second-class player. It is his wonderful excursions to the net that confound his opponents. He always selects the right moment for his own purpose and the wrong

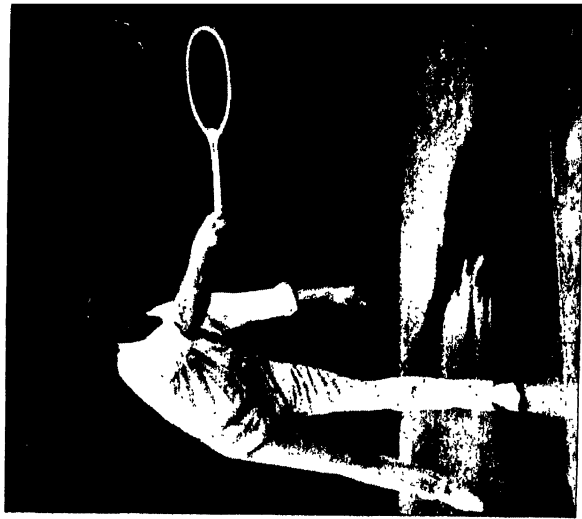
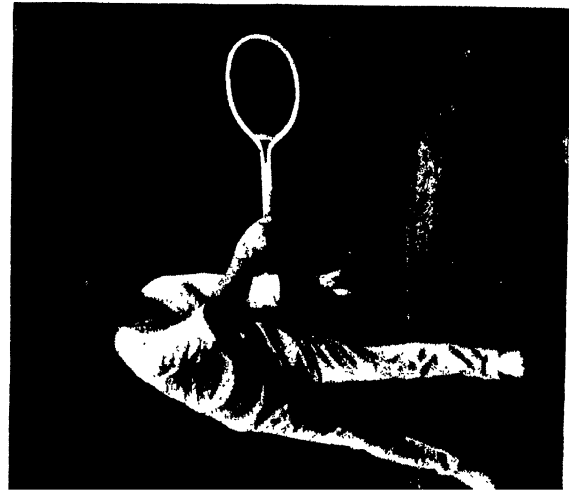
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moment for yours, to come in. No player I know gives less clue as to position or surprises you more by anticipating your shot. Ritchie is typical of the player who hits his ball full and straight. At times he may put on a little top spin, but very little.

Top is imparted to the ball by drawing the racket over with a kind of rolling motion. It is of the utmost importance not to begin putting on top too early in the stroke. Personally I like to feel the ball on the racket and to follow through with it before I start to draw the face over. Many inaccurate shots are due to the fact that players begin to put on top before the ball is near the racket. It stands to reason that if the ball is met with a racket travelling up as well as forward timing the impact must be absolutely perfect for an accurate stroke to result. On the other hand, once get the ball on the racket and "top" can be easily administered.

I regard the backhand as the most difficult, and at the same time the most import-





FINISH OF FOREHAND 100 DRIVE

ant, stroke. Though the majority of players of note can hardly be called weak on their backhands, very few can claim the same severity and accuracy on this side as on the other. The space for taking the backhand is more circumscribed, the action more cramped. The stroke therefore needs more study, practice and perseverance. The habit of running round and taking every ball on the forehand may be condemned ; it only militates against a player ever becoming proficient at this stroke. Beware, however, of robbing Peter to pay Paul. A few keen players—the late H. S. Mahony, for example—have devoted so much study and attention to the cultivation of their backhands that their forehand strokes were relatively of little account.

With a few slight modifications aim at taking your backhand in the same way as your forehand, provided always the latter is good. The position of course is reversed. Right foot forward. A common fault is not to wheel round sufficiently. It is necessary to face sideways ; to stand full face to the

net is hopeless. The racket must be drawn right back, well behind the left ear, and then all the rules laid down for the forehand may be applied. Always try to keep the head of the racket as high above the wrist as convenient. Use the opposite side of the racket for backhand and forehand strokes. Also run the thumb up behind the handle for the backhand.

In regard to volleys the fault of most beginners is to hit rather than push the ball. Lobs and balls shoulder high may be hit, but volleys below the shoulder should be swept. The low volley requires particular care and accuracy ; one of the most difficult arts in the game is to execute it well. By " pushing " I mean holding the racket firmly with a steady forward motion. The strength of the push must depend on the pace at which the object ball is already travelling. Thus to volley a fast drive very little more is required than to hold the racket firmly ; the force of the drive will do the rest. To " stop " volley—*i.e.* to make the ball stop dead—it is necessary to draw







back the racket at the moment of impact. Unless the volley is a cross-court volley, or a stop volley, good length is indispensable. A player may volley consistently and well, but unless he can obtain good length his efforts must fail. Nothing is more certain than that the volleyer will be passed if he makes a bad length return.

When making a cross-court volley a slight cut is useful, and most good volleyers, from Brookes downwards, use it. Not only does the cut make the ball keep low but it imparts a little "go away" to the ball, tendencies which make it difficult for the player standing back to recover. These volleys, of course, are more effective on grass, with its clinging surface. That is why the cut volleyer often fares badly on covered courts; the ball does not bite. I firmly believe in imparting a little cut to cross volleys, but beware, as in the case of top spin, not to overdo it. Too much of a good thing is fatal in everything, especially in regard to putting on cut and spin in lawn tennis.

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In low volleying get down to the ball. Do not stand upright and merely stick the racket down. Bend yourself down as shown in the illustration.

Another rule to remember is, *whenever possible and convenient*, keep the head of the racket above the wrist. The question of expediency is most important, for it is the greatest mistake in the world to sacrifice efficiency for style. Many English players err in one direction and Australians in the other. But the main point to remember is that low volleys should be played with a horizontal and not with a vertical racket, and that steering is assisted if the head is kept up.

Here again, of course, there can be no hard-and-fast rule, for many strokes are taken more conveniently with the head of the racket down. But I remember H. S. Mahony, a magnificent player and profound student of the game with whom I was fortunate enough to be associated in doubles for two years, went so far as to say that all strokes should be executed with the head

of the racket above the wrist. Whether he was right or wrong, none of the modern players has excelled for grace, accuracy and pace the Irishman's backhand ground stroke or volleying. When I was a very young player, Mahony helped me immeasurably, and I shall never forget his kindness.

To come back to volleying. When you are at close quarters, and cannot follow the flight of the ball, the best thing to do, to my mind, is to place your racket in such a position that the whole and full face of it is open to meet the ball. Then, provided your guess is not very far from the mark, the ball will strike the racket and return into the court. Of course the racket must be held firmly.

When the ball comes suddenly, and the flight has not been followed, many players execute a stroke with what a cricketer would call a cross bat. It is obvious that, in moving the racket across, there is only a fraction of a second when the ball can be hit cleanly and timed correctly.

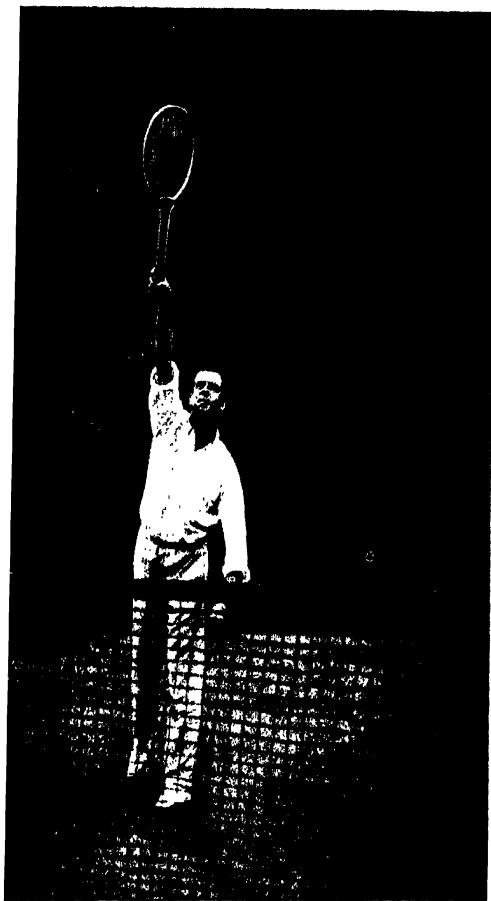
Meet the ball, then, with the full face of

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the racket towards it. Above everything, do not force volleys. Hit them hard provided they are shoulder high or lobs and you can see them all the way and feel sure of the stroke. But in fast quick volleys the racket must be shot down or up into the correct position first. Then regulate the stroke. If the ball comes fast hardly any forward motion is necessary ; if it approaches slowly a little more push may be given to the ball.

Another very important point is to take the ball when level with the body. Do not snatch out at it before it reaches you ; in such a case faulty direction must inevitably result. Always take the ball as high from the ground as convenient and practicable. Move in and meet it. The higher you take a volley the greater the command of your opponent's court. You are pursuing that vital principle of hitting *down*.

The smash plays a most important part in tennis, especially in the modern double. Low volleying has been brought to such a state of perfection that driving straight at one's opponent is often of little avail. It is



MY SMASH—SUCH AS IT IS





therefore necessary to adopt an expedient in order to confound your opponent who has gained the attacking position at the net. A lob is now counted an aggressive as well as a defensive stroke. Thus it comes about that the player smashing accurately and consistently has frequent opportunities to bring this invaluable stroke into use. Probably the most common fault to be found in smashing is the tendency to attempt the impossible. How often have I seen a beginner essaying a cross-court smash at an angle and speed far too risky even for Beals Wright. Accuracy first, then hit where and as hard as you like.

It is not always policy to go right out for a smash. Once at the net you hold the advantage, and provided you smash back at good length, and at the same time make your opponent move, there need be no fear for the future.

Another mistake is to smash out of position. It is of the utmost importance to stand in the right way and in the right place. As far as possible wait for the ball so that it

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would drop on your right shoulder or thereabouts. Don't bend forward to hit it in front or tie yourself into a knot in order to hit it from behind your back. The whole stroke is similar to a service. It is of vital importance to follow through. Lean back slightly and go through with your body slightly as you hit. As far as possible strike with the full face of the racket. I do not believe in fancy twists. Attempt what you think you can bring off. This remark refers to every single stroke on the board. When an option is given attempt only what you think it is odds on your accomplishing.

As your strokes get more accurate it is policy to aim closer to the side lines and to allow a very small margin in the region of the back line. An easy smash should always be "buried," as the Americans say. But be very careful not to dig your own grave at the same time. Never overkill for the sake of applause from the crowd. If you can smash a ball out of a man's reach

by a gentle tap, do so—there is no need to bounce it over the pavilion.

Directly your opponent lobs, begin to run into position and give yourself time to steady up before smashing the stroke. I do not believe in patting lobs ; on the contrary no habit is more baneful. Go for the happy medium, always taking your racket well back and bringing it well forward with a steady swing maintained throughout the stroke. And beyond all never falter or hesitate. So many players start off with a gigantic swing, stop dead in the middle and finish up with a tiny tap. That way disaster lies.

As a rule, the half-volley is a good stroke to avoid. On a covered court it may be used consistently and with success. But the half-volley is the blind spot, and it is much more difficult to regulate than any other stroke. George Caridia is the best half-volleyer I have ever seen, and at his best is delightful to watch. Nevertheless, the best advice I can give is that of Mr Punch to the young man about to marry—

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“Don’t!” A half-volley requires much care and calculation. It is necessary to gauge the spot where the ball will pitch with the nicest precision. The ball must be met by the full face of the racket and particular attention must be paid to following through in the right direction. Rather as if you were shovelling sand into a cart—go with it as far as possible.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE WAY TO IMPROVE

THE very best form of practice, and the only royal road to improvement, is stroke play—the training of individual strokes as opposed to an all-round game regulated by scoring. Match play may develop tactics, but the competitive spirit it engenders and the variety of stroke it demands militate against the improvement of a weak and worthless weapon. The player does not get that constant stream of shots in a given direction which enables him to concentrate on one particular defect. Without such select practice he cannot hope to advance. Nor is stroke play such a dull affair as many suppose. Personally I have enjoyed much fun and healthy exercise from half-an-hour's methodical knock-up with a kindred spirit, or, if there be no friend available, against a wall.

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I am convinced it is the one way by which real and rapid progress can be achieved.

The player should obviously select his weakest stroke for this specific treatment. If he has any doubt as to where his main weakness lies, let him ask a candid friend or let him search his own heart—for after all a man's best critic is himself. Good style is only another name for natural style, and if there is any feeling of cramp, or any loss of freedom about the stroke, it follows that nature can only be satisfied by a fundamental change. Once convinced that the old stroke is worthless no time should be lost before a new one is constructed.

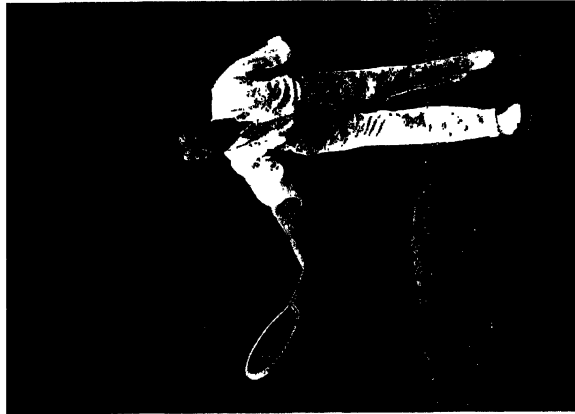
My own experience serves as an example; I may be forgiven for mentioning it. When I came over from New Zealand I took the backhand and forehand strokes—as I think I have mentioned before—with the same face of the racket, and always struck the ball with the head of the racket low down. The elbow went forward and skyward. A great deal of pace and top spin were imparted to the ball and its flight and

direction were consequently deceptive. The stroke, if ugly in style, was a strong weapon of attack; in fact, its possibilities were so great that the striker himself was never quite sure of the ball's ultimate destination. For a hard forcing shot this devil-may-care, swinging backhand cannot be beaten. But picture the endless occasions when I was pushed into the corner and forced to execute a saving backhand shot from balls that had got, so to speak, behind me. Here it is that the Colonial backhand is weighed and found wanting. I was tucked up and out of position. H. L. Doherty and H. S. Mahony impressed upon me the futility of persevering with a stroke so wrong in theory and practice. Converted by these two great players, I set out to learn a new backhand. I need hardly tell you the work, concentration and practice this upheaval involved. After some time I quite lost the old stroke—a difficult process—but could not of course do anything with the new one. Gradually, however, I began to feel the

stroke growing, as it were, on my hand. I developed its strength by training it against a wall, going on to a covered court or into a vacant room. I even practised it up against the deck-house of an ocean liner.

Here I should like to say that I think English players allow their backhands to become too stereotyped. They acquire the habit of hitting the ball in a grooved way—the racket above the wrist, the same amount of swing, the same amount of follow through. That's a principle which would be unassailable if every ball bounded the same height and on the same spot. But fortunately for the variety of the game the pitch changes with every stroke. Therefore I hold that a player should adapt his backhand to the kind of ball with which he has to deal. In all cases fundamental principles hold good. For instance, meeting the ball with the full face of the racket, following through, making the long stroke. But circumstances often necessitate hitting a very low ball, almost digging it up in fact. In such a position it is ob-





MY BACKHAND DRIVE IN THREE POSITIONS



viously impossible to have the racket always above the level of the wrist.

Again, grips for the backhand should not be too stereotyped. Everyone may have his favourite grip when position and stroke can be chosen ; but strokes have sometimes to be made in all sorts of queer ways, and players should not be disconcerted if they find themselves forced to use unorthodox and unfamiliar grips.

Yet, after all is written on this matter of stroke-structure, we come back to five simple rules :

Commence with the racket well behind.

Keep up a steady swing all through the stroke.

Keep the full face of the racket to the ball.

Follow through with the ball and not across the body.

Stand well away from the ball and strike the ball when it is opposite the body, not when it is behind or in front of you.

These rules, of course, apply just as much to the forehand drive. But here the correct

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use of body weight should be practised, for it is an essential factor.

In regard to my own forehand drive I employ body weight a great deal. By this I mean that the ball is given part of its impetus by moving the body with the arm and racket. By this sympathetic movement I find it possible to be slightly more accurate than if I used only the arm and wrist. I bring my shoulder over slightly at the moment I feel the ball on the racket, and this movement gives top spin. To put the thing in a nutshell, the shoulder rather than the arm is employed for topping the ball. I like a high bounding ball; the higher it bounds the harder it may be hit and yet kept in court. A low bounding ball cannot be hit so hard, for the simple reason that it has to be hit up to clear the net and subsequently can only rely on the law of gravitation to bring it in. A high bounding ball can be hit direct. To think of golf again, you can make a full shot. Therefore I think players who wait for the ball to drop almost to the ground before

hitting are misguided. And the same reflection applies to volleying. Get the ball as high in the air as possible. Obviously a larger area of your opponent's court is open to you.

I believe in a player practising with his eyes almost as much as with his hands. In another chapter I refer to the value of "looking on" at a match in order to gain tactical knowledge. But the spectator may often acquire useful hints by studying the actual strokes of the best players, especially those strokes which enable them to save labour. Beals Wright's manner of ending a long lobbing exchange is a case in point. He will run behind the ball, suddenly wheel round and, using a vertical racket, kill the ball hard between the two advancing volleyers, both of whom believe, when they come up, that he is going to toss again.

I am not in favour of a beginner slavishly imitating the style of any one player, but he should get the broad lines. Strokes cannot be reproduced like newspapers coming hot from the printing press, and I should

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be sorry to set my own strokes up as perfect models. I shall be quite satisfied if the illustrations and hints modestly offered in this volume assist young players to formulate ideas and determine which is and which is not the rational way to hit the ball.

I repeat that stroke practice is of incalculable value. But that does not mean that a player should confine himself to practising strokes. It is judicious to blend that exercise with a few hard sets in which weaker strokes are given the monopoly of work. It is not a bad idea to begin operations with half-an-hour's backhands down the side line—a stroke you may rarely succeed in bringing off when playing a match. Your opponent has equally good practice, for his object should be to hit the ball as near your backhand corner as possible. Then you may try the same stroke from the right-hand side.

By changing into different positions it is easy to practise every move on the board. Take, for example, the passing shot. Get

your opponent at the net and try to pass him continuously with the same stroke. It will be found that even one side of the court is quite large enough for him to cover. Of course, you will mutually agree beforehand on the plan of campaign.

As a further change, both can go up to the net and practise cross-court volleys, though perhaps this is a more advanced form of training. As a rule stroke practice should be devoted to improving your vulnerable ground strokes. In a match, unless a farce is contemplated, the mind must be focussed on winning, on avoiding rather than employing your weak strokes. But in the kind of friendly set I have in mind all your attention should be given to the individual stroke. Try and ascertain why the ball went wrong; experiment in every direction until you get at the root idea, and then pursue it.

In carrying out these rehearsals it is a great mistake to economize in balls. See that you have enough and to spare, as well as the services of a wide-awake boy to pick

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them up. Nothing checks the progressive value of practice more than a periodical ball hunt. If switched off the stroke in hand and cast into unsympathetic places like hedges and rhododendron bushes, the mind returns to work slowly.

Some mention of service has been made in the previous chapter. Whether your service is good or bad depends entirely on yourself. Here are a few cardinal points to remember when practising :

Hit the ball when it is high—*i.e.* a comfortable arm and racket length above your head—what cricketers call a high delivery.

Hit the ball when it is actually overhead, so that (if allowed to fall) it would alight on or near your right shoulder. You can practise throwing the ball up without hitting it.

Keep steady on your feet, and do not leap in the air or serve on the run as if you were a fast bowler.

It doesn't matter who your opponent is. Get a couple of dozen balls and serve until



you are tired. I have had my very best service practice with a small brother who at the time was only ten years old. Occasionally he got hold of a ball and promptly knocked it over the fence, but since the penalty was recovery he soon learnt discretion.

The quality of your service depends enormously on the amount of practice you give it. Sound and effective services are not inspired overnight. Nor, indeed, are any really good and lasting strokes. Efficiency can only be obtained by care, patience and determination. One hears the lament, "Oh, all my opponents here are so rotten, how can I improve?" Yet, if the speaker only knew it, the remedy for improving his accuracy and consistency lies ready at hand. He may have good strokes and know the game well, but is he so perfect a player that driving and volleying practice can be dispensed with? After all, the great difference between a really first-class player and one just on the border-line is that the one is consistently accurate and the

other only spasmodically accurate. Norman Brookes learnt to play better than anyone else in Australia. He studied and carried out his own theories independently.

Of course I agree that opportunity means everything, but it is a fallacy for country players to imagine that good practice would immediately place them in the first flight. It might only serve to expose their limitations and to send them back to the nursery. You may learn as much, if not more, by handling a racket alone on court as by a serious combat in a tournament. That is one reason why I think the professional has a great advantage. He may have to play "bumble puppy" and silly little mixed singles, but the mere fact of having a racket in his hand all day, of always hitting the ball where he intends it to go, gives him a great pull over the average amateur. And, of course, sandwiched in with these instructive knock-ups, the "professor" enjoys his match against a player more of his own class. To Heirons of Queen's Club, deservedly one of the best and most popular

professors, let me say that I owe much. His advice is always sound and based on a close and intimate study of the game.

Professionals sometimes grumble and declare they would have been much better if they had enjoyed more first-class practice. Personally I think very few of them would ever have been first-class at all if they had not been professionals. At golf and every other game the professor is invariably ahead of the amateur. That is only natural. The professor is at it all day and every day ; playing becomes second nature to him ; above all, it is his livelihood. But I think the last consideration is the least conspicuous. Personally, I have found every professional I have met in all countries an excellent type of man, capable, intelligent and courteous. I only wish every club could afford to place one on its staff.

A player requires no opponent to improve the smash, a stroke so dependent on timing and accurate hitting. A small boy and a dozen balls will give him all the practice he wants. Instruct the boy to throw the

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balls high up in the air so that they would bound on or near the back line, and further make him vary the height. Then wade in. You will find this training as good for the respiratory organs as for the smashing.

Volleying or practising ground strokes against a wall is, as I have said elsewhere, a splendid education, providing one of the best forms of exercise. It may be difficult to find a serviceable wall in your immediate neighbourhood, but a search is well worth while. Stables or garages often have just the wall for this purpose. A line the height of the net should be drawn to enable proper altitude to be gauged. An asphalt surface for ground play is to be preferred. I have found a gymnasium with a good wall answer requirements admirably. Also, if it is not sacrilege, a fives, squash or racket court affords unimpeachable walls. Many a weary half-hour have I spent in the Cambridge Racket Court trying to learn a new backhand stroke and, more difficult still, to unlearn an old one. There is a historic building in Cambridge which goes

by the name of Corn Exchange. Here the undergraduate experiences almost every emotion known to budding man. When I was endeavouring to defeat the examiners in the "Little Go" I conceived the idea of converting this wonderful building into a temporary covered court. The scheme eventually fructified, but the town band gave weekly balls and polished the floor to such an extent that our game the next morning resembled hockey on ice. Luckily, bulb and potato sales, bringing farmers with muddy boots, took off some of the polish and we had many a good game beneath this musty roof.

The whole secret about practising lawn tennis strokes is to concentrate on the work in hand. Don't wonder why the back cylinder of your motor cycle refuses to fire, or worry about your business. Think all the time why that stroke went out and what you can do to keep it in. Do not practise when you are sick and weary. But, on the other hand, don't shirk. Keep at it even though you are a little warm and out of

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breath. Good strokes can only be brought to a state of perfection by arduous work. All the tactics, training and experience in the world are of no avail to the player whose strokes are inaccurate. Intelligent and constant practice is the secret by which every player can improve his game out of all recognition.

## CHAPTER III

### POINTS IN TACTICS

I AM well aware that tactical success and what is known as sound generalship at lawn tennis are best acquired by practical experience on the court. However explicit a writer may be in giving advice on paper, precepts are apt to be forgotten when it comes to the actual practice of the game. Nevertheless I hope the few remarks I have to offer on this all-important matter may be of some service. Perfect style, inexhaustible stamina, even the best strokes are of no avail if the brain that governs the hand is not taking stock of strategical positions and planning moves by which winning coups may be achieved. Some great players — the Dohertys, for example — were tacticians by instinct. Grasping their opponents' weak points, manœuvring them out of position, creating

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favourable situations for the exercise of their own art, were to them second nature. Other great players only become good generals after laborious practice and many defeats. They have trained themselves in the school of adversity. If the hints that follow, founded on experience in actual match play, help to throw a little light in dark places and increase the reader's pleasure in the game a single degree, I shall be satisfied.

The late Ernest Renshaw was once asked by a feminine admirer what he considered the secret of success at lawn tennis. "Get the ball over the net, madam," was his laconic reply. That oft-told story puts the case in a nutshell. You cannot become a good general until you have adequate forces at your command. All preconceived theories will be upset if your backhand or forehand is so unreliable that the opening you have planned cannot be accepted. But of the value of tactics when the strokes are there to support them one cannot be too emphatic. How often an old and experienced player defeats a younger



and more brilliant opponent! Tactics and tactics alone pulled the old head through.

The simplest application of tactics is, I suppose, to play to your opponent's weakest spot — generally his backhand. That simple rule is capable of such extension in every direction that no single stroke need be executed without the striker having some object or scheme behind it. In such a case tactics may appear to the beginner in much the same light as higher mathematics to the primary schoolboy. Then the beginner must take Mr Renshaw's advice to heart before he goes further.

The two main principles in tactics are :

- (1) Cover your own weakness.
- (2) Mercilessly attack your opponent's most vulnerable points.

As to the first, players are seldom equally good all round. Therefore, in order to make your play as efficient as possible, it is necessary to protect your weak strokes. Of course, it must be clearly understood that the subject under discussion is generalship in a match which, by hook or by crook,

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must be won. In practice, to cover your weaker departments is madness, with only one possible result—the consolidation and permanence of your weakness. But in a match, if we take the case of a man with a good forehand drive and little volleying capacity, his policy must clearly be to use his principal stroke as much as possible. He must keep sufficiently at the back of the court so that by a flanking movement he can avoid using his backhand more than is absolutely imperative. The same reflection, of course, applies to the man with the weak forehand. It is poor policy for a back-court player pure and simple to go up to the net, except on the very rare occasion his judgment calls. No sight is more pitiable than that of a player so weak on the volley that he resembles a frightened schoolgirl. Let him remain in an environment which has a friendly atmosphere. When the main object is to win the match a player is well advised if he make full use of his virtues and at the same time cover his defects.

But your opponent will also have several

little deficiencies which it is your business to "smell out" and pursue. Your generous nature may be consoled by the thought that such discernment is good for him even if he loses the match. I am convinced that the very obvious policy of playing to an opponent's weak point is seldom put to the best and fullest advantage. In the excitement of battle and in the anxiety to bring off his own favourite shot, a player is apt to forget all about his adversary's distribution of power. Take the forehand drive, for example. Most men have a favourite direction. It may be across the court or down the side line, but for one or the other direction nearly every player has a preference. Find this out, first by watching him from the gallery, and then when on court anticipate the direction in which he prefers to hit. The result will be that he is forced either to hit straight at you or to make a stroke which is less accurate because less familiar. Your opponent's backhand may be similarly studied. In fact, it is the backhand which, as a rule, best repays

analysis. It is common enough to find men quite good at a cross-court backhand, but singularly inaccurate in other directions. If you happen to be a volleyer a little information of this kind tucked away in your brain enables you to anticipate correctly.

Another point, quite obvious but often overlooked, is to study closely your opponent's volleying. There is usually a great difference in his method of dealing with backhand and forehand shots. Again, it often happens that he can only place accurately in one direction; at any rate he will have a favourite direction. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Against a player who smashes superbly make up your mind to do everything except lob. Or if you must lob, toss to his backhand. A player whose chief method of attack is volleying and whose ground play is weak loses his grip of the game at once if forced to stay back. Therefore your one object must be to get him back. The most efficient counter-tactics is to get to the net yourself on every conceivable occasion. If you arrive there

first he will have no option but to stay back on the defensive. Bearing this point in mind, a player who stays back as a general rule would be well advised to hustle up to the net far more than is his custom.

The modern tendency in lawn tennis is to volley more. The American service and its many off-shoots have been responsible for the change in a great measure. Of course, much depends on the quality of the service. That is where so many players go wrong. They desert their better judgment. To come in on a service which forces your opponent several yards behind the baseline and spins away is one thing ; to follow up a soft, guileless, high-bounding service quite another. A player who makes a habit of coming in on his service necessarily plays the major part of his game on the volley.

Whether it is best to run up on your service or to stay back pending a favourable opportunity must be decided in each individual case. It depends on :

(1) The efficiency of the service.

- (2) The volleying capacity of the server.
- (3) The kind of service return possessed by your opponent.
- (4) The agility the server is able to display in getting up to the net and moving when there.

Nothing improves a player's volleying more than to make a practice of coming up on every service. Possibly it would be wiser to suspend this rule temporarily in important matches, but I believe the advice, first given by Dr Eaves, a staunch advocate of the volleying game, to be perfectly sound in principle. Eaves has demonstrated the value of his opinion in a practical manner. That opinion is always the same: "Learn to volley, and come up all the time."

I would, however, qualify the advice in one respect. Many first-class players at the present time serve their second ball as hard and as fast as their first. In this case it is policy to go up all the time. But it is courting disaster to come in on a weak service.

In running up it is of the utmost importance to come in all the way. The service-line is a position absolutely untenable. Nothing is easier than for an opponent to pass you in this position, and if by any chance you do get at the ball you are probably forced to execute a half volley or other defensive stroke. Over and above this, it is always easier to volley from close to the net than from a point farther back in the court. In fact, always work forward. Volley strokes presenting the greatest difficulties, if executed from the service-line, can often be transformed into "soft things" by the mere act of advancing to the net. What of the lob? you say. A lob under the circumstances can be very awkward to deal with; but it is possible to anticipate lobs fairly accurately, and unless the lob is judged to a nicety vengeance may be ready at hand. And I always think that when you can force your opponent into frequent resource to tossing, you put him on the defensive. To hold the attacking hand is half the battle.

A lob in a single is not as a rule so deadly (unless a clean pass) as it is in a double. Many players find it comparatively easy to combine accuracy with the requisite pace to kill a lob in a single, whereas in a double, with two opponents on the base-line to pick up smashes, far greater pace and accuracy are essential to kill outright. To take a concrete example, Norman Brookes can always deal death to lobs in a single, but he finds some difficulty in burying a lob in a double. Two agile opponents guarding the base, instead of one, make all the difference.

It may happen that the volleyer gets passed time after time. But this is no reason why the volleyer should change his tactics. After a set or even two of perseverance the back-court player will probably break down and deliver himself into the hands of the man at the net. I've seen this occur too often not to realize its truth.

The point in a volley *v.* back line game is that the man at the back has to make the shots to win. A volleyer to succeed must cultivate anticipation. Lady players are,



as a rule, singularly deficient in this art. All successful players have the power of anticipation developed to a remarkable degree. Players like Brookes and H. L. Doherty seem to know intuitively exactly where the ball is coming. By doing three things a player ought, generally speaking, to be in the right place. Let him :

1. Remember the striker's favourite stroke.
2. Scrutinize his racket and general poise, from which the intended destination of the ball can in a great measure be gathered.
3. Bear in mind the most likely stroke—*i.e.* the stroke he himself would attempt in a similar predicament.

Over and above the simple rules, which the average player works out for himself unconsciously, the successful volleyer must exercise his intelligence. The less he leaves to guesswork the more accurate will be his anticipation. Nothing demoralizes a back-court player so much as the consistent anticipation of his passing shots.

The exercise of judgment in deciding when to go up to the net and when to stay back during a rally is a matter about which it is impossible to give definite advice. But gauging the right moment for an advance is half the secret of success. You are not concerned merely with your own volleying powers, but must further estimate the measure and limitations of your opponent's passing powers. Simple as the following advice appears, it is nevertheless sound and sums up the whole situation. When once you get a good length ball on to your opponent's weakest stroke come right up to the net. Never hesitate, but go quickly in. "Never up, never win," is a maxim which, slightly changing the golf precept, should be burning on your brain.

A hard five-set match may test a player's endurance to the utmost limits. Only a sequence of boxing bouts can compare with it. Some players believe in holding themselves back, in resting during a set, and in adopting other expedients to give them a respite from the strain. But the safe rule is

to start off hard and go hard all the time. Of course circumstances may periodically arise which make it advisable to modify this rule ; but no man can afford to slack down in the knowledge that he can spurt again. When you feel quite baked console yourself with the reflection that your opponent is probably in a similar or worse predicament. I was in such a position during the challenge round of the Championship of 1911.

Occasionally one has lost ground in the early stages of the fourth set and the chances of saving the set appear hopeless. A rest may be excusable if you are absolutely done ; but remember a rest to you is a rest to your opponent. There may be one exception. I recall an occasion on which I decided not to go out my hardest at first. My opponent was an American volleyer, and a beautiful lobber to boot—in fact, the best lobber I have ever met. His only other good ground stroke was a short chop, a very difficult ball to get up to. In a previous match he had repeatedly lobbed clean over my head and then, having got me back,

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chopped the return short. Very clever tactics, but, relatively speaking, they should not be good enough to win a match. In our first contest I kept on attacking and won a set. I led four games to one in the second. But in spite of being very fit, the physical strain began to tell on my play and I eventually lost. The next time I met the same player I began slowly, mindful of the fact that my attack would be more useful in the second half of the match. I did not deliberately slack—that might have proved fatal—but I kept some sort of restraint over my ardour. In the first match I did all the work while my opponent was playing well within himself. On the second occasion I managed to make him do most of the work for the first two sets which he won ; but when the crisis came at the beginning of the third set I had plenty of reserve and was able to adopt forcing methods. My opponent, having been pressed hard, was no longer fresh enough to execute his lobs and little drop shots with the remarkable accuracy he showed at the start.

I merely give this personal experience as an illustration of what, in this particular instance, I deemed to be sound policy. Possibly the same circumstances might not occur again in a whole season. In nine cases out of ten—no, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred—my rule is to go out from the first stroke until the last. Then if I lose, I cannot reproach myself on the ground that I did not strike my hardest.

My advice to those who seek it, then, is : Go your toughest from the first stroke until game, set and match is called. Always be spurring yourself on to fresh efforts. Never relax for a second whatever the score may be. Physical expenditure is generally not so much to blame for a player “ curling up ” as the lack of mental concentration and effort. The body will usually go forward all right if you have the will-power to make it. Remember pluck and determination can accomplish wonders.

Much that I have written in regard to singles applies equally well to doubles. At present players in the United States devote

more attention to team work in doubles than those in England and Australasia. In America they seem, as it were, to hatch their plots overnight. In England many pairs, even of high individual skill, are content to wait until the battle begins before considering their plan of campaign. And then, of course, it is often too late. One player may be inclined to stay back and adopt a defensive game in the hope that the other side will "grow wild"; his partner may want to force the pace at the net. A conference on court and a mutual agreement as to tactics would be all very well if the umpire were willing to grant the necessary respite, and if the opponents were obliging enough to forfeit the obvious advantage gained by preconcerted plans sympathetically carried out. Trusting to luck is the secret of many a dismal failure in doubles.

The advantages of preliminary training, so much in vogue in America, are manifold and obvious. Accurate perception of what to do yourself, and what to leave to your partner to do, can only be acquired by constant

practice in double harness. In a perfect combination hardly a word need be spoken by either player. The two Dohertys were remarkable in this respect. Scarcely a sound was uttered on the court by either. Of course silence is not essential to success ; if it were the twin Allens would not have been in the front rank for over a score of years. From love all to game, set and match they will indulge in incessant banter, to the huge delight of the gallery. They were (for the resemblance is less striking to-day) so exactly alike in form and feature that one had the greatest difficulty in distinguishing them. Many a time Charlie, the better server, might have delivered his brother's service undetected by umpires and spectators. Personally I found salvation in identifying the respective twins by examining their teeth. Charlie had a few less than his brother Roy.

Apropos of conversation between partners, I remember overhearing rather a curious incident at a metropolitan tournament. A certain well-known lady volleyer was play-

ing with a no less distinguished partner, who had put on superfluous tissue during the winter months. The lady, accustomed to speak her mind with remarkable freedom, became very annoyed with her partner, who kept on trotting about in the vicinity of the back line instead of joining her at the net. When she could stand it no longer she shouted to her partner: "Man, come to the net!" The disjointed reply came between gasps: "Woman—I—have—no—breath!"

But however much their demeanour may have differed on court, in one all-important matter the two famous pairs I have alluded to, the Dohertys and the Allens, were identical. They were absolutely and entirely in agreement as to tactics. Whenever possible, both kept in line. In other words, they worked as one big man. The principle of sinking the individual in the interests of the combination was rigidly adhered to by these pairs, who for team work were on an equality with any other ever seen on the tennis court.



Another important point in double play affects the position of the striker's partner. To take a concrete example: Should Alexander stand at the net when Wright is receiving the service? The Americans said no. The Dohertys and Allens said yes. Now we find the modern tendency is for both partners to keep back on the American principle and move netwards together, the very second—or, better still, the second before—an opportunity occurs.

One has always to speculate ahead at lawn tennis. To put it in other words, one must always be anticipating the return. A great measure of the success achieved by Brookes and H. L. Doherty was due to their wonderful power of anticipation, especially when at the net. When a second or third class player opposes Brookes he marvels, if he is a thinking man, why Brookes is always waiting on the side of the court for which he has decided—alas! too late—to aim.

Talking of Brookes, I have often been

asked which I consider the finer player—the champion of 1907 or H.L. Doherty. Let me say at once that, in my opinion, the two Dohertys were individually and in combination the most graceful and finished players that have ever lived. And there can be no doubt in my mind that H. L. Doherty was a finer player than Smith, Beals Wright, Larned, Alexander, and any other giant of to-day or yesterday. But whether he was a finer player than Norman Brookes is another matter. Personally—and I speak from a wide experience of both—I confidently maintain that Brookes is a better player than Laurie Doherty was at his best.

The two met twice, but neither match could be called satisfactory or conclusive. On the first occasion, when Doherty won, Brookes had an injured shoulder which was a very considerable handicap. On their second meeting Brookes won ; but, taking into consideration the fact that the match was a friendly affair, and that neither player had enjoyed preliminary practice for it, we

can hardly attach the same weight to the victory as if it had been earned in a Davis Cup competition or championship match. Nevertheless, I consider Brookes the finest player the world has ever seen.

At the time of writing, Doherty has descended the tennis ladder; and from what I hear is scarcely likely to mount it again. But if he gave up golf, and took seriously to his first love again, I see no reason why he should not be as good as he ever was. He is still a young man, and, even if he were not, age, up to a certain limit, seems to be an advantage in lawn tennis! Gore, thrice champion, is over forty years of age. But I believe, if Doherty ever came back, he would find certain definite changes in the type of attack. Up to a few years ago his game was accepted as the only really correct style, without which it was impossible to become a champion. But is that quite the case to-day? His game was essentially an all-round one—a characteristic much to be commended—but he was not severe except overhead and on

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short volleys. His backhand and forehand were equally reliable and accurate, but it was proved that a really up-to-date and cunning volleyer could hold him at the net.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAINING IN SUMMER AND WINTER

BROADLY speaking, the best training for lawn tennis is to play lawn tennis. But for championship matches it is impossible to get into a state of physical efficiency by tennis alone. Play must be combined with various other exercises. The prizefighter does not limit his training to sparring. Boxing may be his staple food, but walking, running, skipping, ball-punching are equally vital to his existence. And therefore I deny that it is possible for a lawn tennis player to be at his best for hard match play if his previous preparation has been confined exclusively to tennis.

It may or it may not be worth the trouble—personally I think it is—but the player who desires to do himself full justice on court must undergo a hard and strenuous preparation off the court. I have had a

fairly extensive experience in watching the effects of various systems of training in almost every branch of athletics ; it is a subject that has always interested and appealed to me from my early youth, and I should be sorry not to give it prominence in this volume. I am quite sure that a man who brings his body to a state of perfection is happier and better off than the man who has neglected his body and developed his mind. Of course *mens sana in corpore sano* is the ideal at which all should aim.

About three weeks previous to the Davis Cup contest in Australia—played, as it happened, with the thermometer pointing to 98° F. in the shade—Brookes and I went through a course of systematic training, and it proved invaluable. Some men in training can stand a lot of work—the more you give them the more they thrive—but Brookes does not come into that category. He had to be very carefully handled, for the slightest over-exertion knocks him up. Perhaps, therefore, the following daily routine



TRAINING FOR THE DAVIS CUP AT MELBOURNE, 1908  
*.After a morning's work on Norman Brookes' court at Brockwood*





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may seem comparatively light work, but I give it for what it is worth :—

7 A.M.—Up and a cup of weak tea ; walk and a little running.

8.30 A.M.—Breakfast.

11 A.M.—Some stroke practice and then three, four or sometimes five sets against each other as hard as we could go.

1.30 P.M.—Lunch.

3.30 P.M.—Possibly three sets of doubles or some other stroke practice. If smashing had been weak it received special attention.

Skipping, running or a little game with the wall ended the athletic day. Two baths and a good deal of massage, and to bed at 10.15. We ate anything within reason, and, as a rule, drank barley water ; but in this respect we were not rigidly particular, and sometimes a little very light beer was consumed. The difficulty of course is to practise for one and a half hours in a boiling sun and then confine yourself to about one glass of fluid in the middle of the day. It

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is excusable to drink more at night, when the day's work is done.

I admit that strict training is irksome, and I have carried matters to an extreme only three times in my life, and probably will never do so again ; but by observing a very few simple rules a player can easily keep himself fit enough for ordinary match play. These rules may be tabulated :

Go to bed and get up early. This ought not to be any hardship.

Be as much in the fresh air as possible and always sleep with the window open.

Be moderate in all things, especially in eating, smoking and drinking.

Never play just after a meal.

Some players " go " in one part of their body, while others go in another. I have come across players who get cramp in their legs in the fifth set as regularly as clock-work. It is very easy to spend five minutes before the morning tub developing the fractious limb. Other players get so blown after a sequence of long rallies as to become

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practically useless for the rest of the match. In such cases good breathing exercises will work remarkable results in a short time. In addition, such players will develop beautiful chests !

Diet, of course, is of vital importance. Some years ago I was bound for Cannes, my first visit to the Riviera. I was then not quite as good as Ritchie and players of his class, and I had determined to make up by faultless condition what I lacked in tennis ability. By a lucky coincidence I made friends with a charming, grey-haired old gentleman who was travelling in the same compartment. It eventually transpired that he was a retired Indian medical officer, and I soon perceived that what he did not know about training was not knowledge.

Well, we arranged to have our meals together, as our hotel happened to be the same. My friend religiously superintended every particle of food I ate for over three weeks. Beautiful ices, chocolate cakes and other delicacies dear to the young palate were summarily dismissed. To food of this order

the doctor made one remark, "Don't touch it, my boy ; it takes up room and does no good."

He was also very strict about eating and drinking before playing. An interval of two good hours at least he insisted upon. If a match had to be played after lunch I gave up all hope of a square meal at midday. I am sure he was right in his prescriptions, for the direct result of his training was that I was able to win for the first time several of the Riviera tournaments. Any little self-denials were amply compensated for by winning when I had not expected to win, and further when the standard of my play hardly warranted my winning.

The result of a hard-fought tennis match depends often on the merest detail, and the scale has been turned in thousands of matches of all grades by that all-important factor—physical fitness. But it must be remembered that condition may not operate at all unless the players engaged are fairly well matched. If a game were to be arranged between Norman Brookes and the champion of Ceylon, let us say, it would

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not entail a physical strain on the Australian. To extend the principle further, a match between Brookes and Ritchie might or might not entail a physical strain. In a previous match Brookes hardly got warm, but it is impossible to tell when every ounce of stamina he possessed would not be requisitioned. Therefore in match play step on the court whenever possible fit and well. Be in a position to say to yourself, "This chap is pretty good, and may beat me, but I am sure of one thing—it won't be through lack of condition." It is wonderful what confidence that reflection gives.

Writing thus reminds me that different players take up different personal attitudes before a match. No player, unless he is an idiot, should tell his friends that he thinks he can beat an opponent if he is not prepared to lay ten to one on himself. One champion I knew was always modesty personified, and if he was matched to meet a second-class player would affect all sorts of doubts. On the other hand, my friend

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Norman Brookes is the embodiment of quiet serenity. I have many times envied him his confidence.

My very first meeting with Brookes was at Wimbledon, ten minutes before he played A. W. Gore in the final of the Kent Championship, decided at the All England Club. After chatting about Australia and Davis Cup prospects, I ventured to say, "Do you think you can win this match, Brookes?" "*Win it?*" he replied. "I'll be thundering surprised if I don't." And of course he went straight into court and did exactly as he expected. The mental attitude of Brookes before a match would seem to be this: "Fancy this chap having the cheek to play me! Beat him! Of course I can beat him!" He is perfectly sure both before and during the match that nothing but some dreadful catastrophe could ever cheat him of victory. This confidence is not conceit in any shape or form. It is merely his own mental attitude. He generally tells you if he thinks he is going to win and is very seldom, if ever, wrong.

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Probably the best course to adopt, certainly the safest course, is not to prophesy at all, but in your own mind be quite convinced. Personally I have always cultivated another outlook, which is not usually thought as effective as the above. I always try to imagine my opponent better than he is. I persuade myself at the outset that he is really very good, and that if I beat him it is a feather in my cap. Admitting the quality of your opponent, and further allowing that he is as likely to beat you as you him, should have a two-fold effect: (1) You will try all the way; and (2) you will not be disconcerted if "held" by a player you underrated.

It is partly through a miscalculation of this kind that one sees first-class players unaccountably crack up. If the first-class man had taken up the attitude that his opponent was good, and would probably hold him for a certain period of the match at any rate, he would not lose his balance when the crisis came. Undoubtedly the most embarrassing position to face is to

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commence a match against an opponent whom one has contemplated can be easily beaten, and then, in spite of putting forth every effort, to discover yourself gradually going to leeward.' If you had only gone into court with a higher estimate of your adversary the mere fact of being a little behind at any period would be regarded as the see-saw of the game—so you would tell yourself. And of course it is the unexpected happening that brings about the downfall of good players by their inferiors.

Young players competing in tournaments against Wimbledon cracks should therefore go their very hardest, for there is no moral certainty that the crack's physical and nervous condition is proof against an unexpected loss of games. It is therefore foolish to slack about and fail to try even when all the prophets predict your downfall. Another point: if you are beaten, don't be afraid to interrogate your opponent about his methods. You will find that his vanity is tickled and that he will be delighted to show you points simple to him, but which



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may have been obscure to you for months. Be explicit and explain your difficulty or your doubts.

I am a believer in winter indoor play. It has been proved over and over again that any player having the inclination for and opportunity of indulging in hard court play during the winter months can not only retain his game but ultimately improve it. In Australasia and other countries more favoured than England in respect to climate lawn tennis is considered quite as much a winter game as golf. The limited number of hours of good light during the average winter day may be a serious handicap to the enthusiast desiring a game after office hours, but a few specially favoured workers can generally spare part of one afternoon a week in addition to the week end.

Before speaking at length on hard court play let me say a few words about the courts themselves. For play confined entirely to winter I am inclined to favour asphalt or concrete, because it dries quickly and is not affected by rain, however heavy or continuous.

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With a broom and a few mops the court can be made fit for play immediately it clears up overhead. Good drainage and a hard surface extending right up to the stop netting as well as to the ends and sides of the court are most desirable in order to keep the ball clean and dry. During a hot summer asphalt and concrete courts afford doubtful delights, but even then are infinitely preferable to some grass courts encountered, courts which are chiefly noticeable for the absence of grass and the presence of worm casts. For all the year round, the sand or cinder variety of court is most suitable; it is not nearly so hot as asphalt or concrete. The initial outlay of constructing a good hard court is an item, but the upkeep is quite insignificant. The lines are painted in, and subsequently little labour need be expended on the court.

As to covered courts, unfortunately there are still only a very limited number of these in England, and their use is almost entirely confined to the leisured classes. Apart from the drawback of breathing your hardest in a confined atmosphere, the

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covered court game has this advantage from a purely tennis point of view—it is not affected by wind or sun or false bounds. Those players who have the opportunity of regular covered court practice will always hold an advantage over their less favoured brethren of the racket. What is wanted in England is a greater number of hard courts. We are at present singularly deficient in what is obviously the most suitable variety of court for our variable climate. This important fact is slowly becoming apparent to the lawn tennis community of England, and very soon the number of hard courts will be doubled. With increased facilities for hard court practice a general raising of the standard of play would, I feel firmly convinced, result.

A development likely to attain far-reaching results in covered courts, owing to the remarkable improvements recently effected in artificial lighting, is night play under favourable conditions. The perfect lighting system has yet to be invented, but “Holophane” diffused light is worthy of trial. The principle

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is both simple and effective. Instead of showing a bright light within a small radius and a dim religious one beyond, the lamp diffuses an equal light throughout the whole area. It is worked by an ingenious system of reflectors. Judging from personal observation—though it has not yet been applied to lawn tennis—this system should make night play possible under first-class conditions. For rackets and squash it has already shown itself to be an excellent substitute for daylight.

But, given moderately decent weather, tennis is far more enjoyable and healthy out of doors than under cover. Personally I would always elect to play out of doors whenever possible. During a summer such as that experienced last year in England, tennis players, in common with every other section of the community, suffered from slackness. Continuous hot weather invariably has such an effect, but on the better days of our much maligned winter no one can suffer from anything but a superabundance of energy. Of course, if you cannot discern your op-

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ponent through the fog, tennis, like any other game, is hardly possible. But such days are fortunately the exception and not the rule.

On any normal winter day, tennis can be enjoyed as much as at any other period of the year ; and players—though I expect there are very few of them keen enough to trouble—can improve their game out of all recognition during the winter months, merely by training themselves. It is of the utmost importance to be able to move, hit and think quickly, and, most important of all, to have the concentration necessary to do all these things from the first stroke to the last of a long and arduous match. Possibly to a man who is naturally very active and strong, additional training would serve no other purpose than keeping him fit ; but to the player who finds difficulty in running back for lobs, or is unable to follow up his service to the net with the necessary celerity, winter training will work wonders. If every man, woman and child were compelled to take regular physical exercise

during the winter it would be of inestimable benefit to the nation at large.

Exercise can take so many diverse forms, and has been made a life study by so many experts, that it appears presumption on my part to go into the matter at all. However, I will risk giving offence and mention what I have found the most useful exercises and training for lawn tennis. They are:

- (1) Skipping.
- (2) Short fast sprints.
- (3) Ball-punching.

If any additional work is required a little time may be devoted to a system of exercises such as the Müller, which develops agility and quickness as opposed to muscle building. Excessive muscular development is a very serious handicap in almost every game.

To deal with the above exercises separately, skipping is one of the best and most severe exercises I know. It strengthens every fibre, and is specially good for quickening up slow movements and developing the wind—a very weak point with most players. There is an infinite variety of

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steps and the exercise need never become monotonous. To see some of the champion boxers skip is a revelation. My advice is, watch them and then try to do likewise.

Short fast sprints quicken a man more than anything else; especially do they train him to get off the mark—a most important asset in a tennis player.

In regard to ball-punching, let me be very emphatic about one point—that is, procure the type of punch ball that hangs loose from a ceiling or a platform and bounces against the ceiling. The ball is pear-shaped; is fitted to a swivel and should be fairly light. Some five or six years ago I was taken to an entertainment given by the fire brigade at Perth in Western Australia. A man called Dinnie—a brother, by the way, of the famous Scottish athlete, Donald Dinnie—gave the most remarkable exhibition of hitting I have ever seen. All the work was done at such lightning speed, and the performer, fit as he was, became so distressed, that this exercise struck me as ideal for tennis training. It tests

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the wind, eye and quick-hitting powers simultaneously. Thus it came to pass that on the following morning I presented myself to Inspector Dinnie at the Fire Brigade Station. Robed in nothing but a pair of trousers (it is 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade in Perth) I soon found out that hitting the ball was not so easy as it looked, and that the ball had a nasty habit of hitting me in the face, to the great amusement of the onlooking firemen. But the rudiments are soon mastered and then a field of incalculable possibilities lies open to the tyro ball-puncher, as everyone knows who has seen an expert at a music hall and marvelled at the perfect time and accuracy of the trick hitting.

Two years after, quite enthusiastic about it, I had the pleasure of meeting, and later of becoming firm friends with, Bob Fitzsimmons, perhaps the greatest fighter the world has ever seen. Bob has the reputation, shared by several others, of being the best ball-puncher in the world. He and I often discussed ball-punching, for Fitz-



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simmons had the highest opinion of it as an all-round exercise. I converted Carnegie Clark, the Open Golf Champion of Australia, to ball-punching. He found it admirable in every respect, and told me that it had loosened his shoulders and given him freedom of motion to an extraordinary degree.

## CHAPTER V

### RAW MATERIAL

IF my father were not a sportsman in the truest and best sense of the word, I should never have aspired to win the lawn tennis championship at Wimbledon, nor incidentally attempted to write a book centring round my favourite game. As an Englishman—he was born in the west country—and devoted to English games, I suppose my father cherished the hope that his son might, without unduly neglecting his education or the more serious affairs of life, achieve distinction in a pastime at which he himself excelled. In point of fact, my father was something of an “all-rounder.” As a boy at Shrewsbury he jumped twenty feet six inches, a distance which I believe stood as a Public School record for many years. Later he won the West of England fours and many other good

rowing races. He also played Rugby football for the West of England and narrowly escaped getting his International Cap. No wonder, then, as children we were all brought up in an atmosphere of sport and out-door life.

As a youngster at Christchurch, New Zealand, my staple exercise was riding, and I spent about three parts of every day on a pony or any other piece of horseflesh available. A healthy family, we used to run a bit wild ; perhaps we were healthy on that account. Up to the age of seven none of us ever wore shoes or stockings. I can almost hear the echo of the dismal howls which accompanied the production of footgear when we paid a rare visit to town. And now when I see other players getting tired and sore feet I look back on those seven years of barefooted freedom and rejoice in the immunity from corns and chilblains produced by a sensible early training. Sandals were unknown to us and glass had to be very sharp to make any impression.

At school I naturally took my cricket and

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football seriously like every good Colonial, and I contrived to hit up a few runs and do my share outside the scrum. At home we had two tennis courts, one of asphalt for winter play and another of grass for summer use. Also we had a cricket net and bowling ground, and last, but certainly not least, a swimming bath to fall into after the day's work. We could all swim before we were four.

My father's religion did not stand in the way of games being played on Sunday afternoon. In hard-working communities, such as abound in the Colonies, Sunday play is encouraged. Many a game of lawn tennis has our bishop keenly followed on Sunday afternoon, smoking his pipe contentedly from a point of vantage at the back of the court. But I do not advocate Sunday play for those able to play all day and every day. Sunday should then be a day of rest.

Members of various representative Australian cricket elevens made their tennis début at Fownhope on Sunday afternoons. In those days my father represented New





Zealand at cricket—he once took eight wickets for twenty-four runs playing for New Zealand against an English test match eleven—and all the cricket fraternity used to drift to us on Sunday and amuse themselves at bowls, “patters” and afternoon tea. Indeed, my first recollection of lawn tennis is picking up balls at one of these gatherings. In those days I looked upon scouting for my father as a great honour, something to go to bed and dream about.

When I was about fourteen years of age it happened that the fourth player was a little late in turning up. Then my father made me take a hand. You can imagine my excitement. But I was a little anxious, for my double faults never failed to evoke enthusiasm on the part of my father. He was always very fair in admonishing, and any excusable mistake went unnoticed, but a double fault or the missing of a “sitter” never failed to call forth, “Boy, what are you doing?” and a somewhat lengthy homily on the enormity of my offence. To my gain—let it be said he continued to scold in

later years when I could just manage to beat him. As a matter of fact, he would no doubt have a little to say even now. We played a great deal in doubles together and do so still.

My first championship was that of Canterbury, when I dislodged a very old friend, R. D. Harman, who had held this title for seven consecutive years and was then past the veteran stage. I was then seventeen and had trained as for a Marathon race during the previous six weeks. The match was a very long one, all five sets were played; it was the long walks over the hills that pulled me through. No doubt this very early demonstration of the absolute necessity of physical fitness for winning important matches gave me a lesson I have never since forgotten.

At this period I played cricket for my province and gave it most time and attention. The following year there chanced to come to Christchurch a Victorian team, including A. W. Dunlop. Our New Zealand players gave them a good run, and Dunlop



only won the singles after a five-set match with one of our best men, F. M. B. Fisher. The matches naturally filled my mind for the time being, and I dare say fired my zeal. At any rate, soon after, I was so far honoured as to be placed in the first-class handicap singles, and with plus fifteen I just managed to win. I also won two other handicaps. But three other small tournaments were the full extent of my tennis experience before coming home. I attended the university in New Zealand for about six months, ostensibly for Latin prose and mathematics. However, my irregularity at lectures was in a measure compensated for by my zest on behalf of the university at lawn tennis and Rugby football.

Something about my native country may interest you. Composed of two islands running almost due north and south, and extending over twelve degrees of latitude, New Zealand provides almost every variety of climate. The northern half of the North Island possesses a beautiful climate which is remarkably equable. South of Dunedin

the climate resembles that of the north of Scotland, and the vast majority of settlers in this district hail from north of the Tweed. In the North Island sheep-shearing extends from September to November, and harvesting from November to January. In the South Island, sheep-shearing is from October to January and harvesting from December to the end of February. In the Auckland district and northwards oranges, bananas and all semi-tropical fruit and vegetation grow and flourish in the open. It is an extraordinary fact that whatever is transplanted to New Zealand thrives better than in its native environment. Take deer, for example. At a recent exhibition held in Vienna, heads shot in New Zealand by his Majesty King George were undoubtedly the finest ever seen. Many of my Austrian and Hungarian friends have asked me about New Zealand, their interest in the country kindled by the very fine display of heads they saw in Vienna—a display for which Lord Desborough, President of the Lawn Tennis Association and one of

the best all-round sportsmen, and the Hon. Edward Stonor were responsible.

Trout in New Zealand grow to such enormous sizes that the average English sportsman always thinks I am telling "fish" stories when I inform him that brown trout are frequently caught up to ten pounds, and sea trout up to thirty pounds. Any Englishman changing the fogs and east winds of England for the warm but never oppressively hot summer of New Zealand can enjoy almost every variety of fishing. He may trawl for monsters on Lake Taupo—in its neighbourhood is a wonderful collection of geysers, sulphurous sprays and lovely natural baths, full of warm transparent water—or he may catch little fellows up to eight pounds in the clear streams that abound all over New Zealand, or, lastly, he may sleep by day and fish by night for large sea trout at the mouth of the great snow-fed rivers, such as the Rakaia, the Rangitata and others. A fishing licence costs half-a-guinea, and there are no private waters. The New Zealander at home is a particularly hospit-

able creature, and one and all consider it a privilege and honour if a stranger will share their fishing excursions. And has not our enlightened Government of New Zealand organized a Tourist Department in each large town? Here not only can the visitor obtain all information concerning every sport, but a daily bulletin is posted giving the fishing state of the various rivers. These are mostly snow-fed and are therefore inclined, especially in the spring, to be erratic.

Those fond of rabbit shooting may, if they so desire, be engaged by demented station-owners at thirty shillings a week and their keep to ply their favourite hobby. In some parts of New Zealand it means a hard day's march if half-a-dozen rabbits are to be bagged, but, on the other hand, I have stood at sunset in a dry river bed and, gazing at the steep shingle facings, seen the sloping cliffs literally move with rabbits; in fact, there have been more rabbits than cliff, giving the effect of the land itself being alive. The wild-duck shooting, once so excellent, has been rather played out of late. However, in the

North Island good sport is still to be had. Hares there are in plenty, averaging nearly two pounds a head more than their European sisters. Some pheasants, Californian quail, teal, swans, and a few other odds and ends are to be met with.

Taken all in all and all the year round, I have no hesitation in saying that the climate of New Zealand is the best in the world. As for the country's natural beauty, that has been described so often by others that it would probably lose rather than gain by any description on my part. I once met an eminent traveller in New Zealand who had been everywhere in the world several times over. "Your Sounds are finer than the Norwegian Fjords, and your Mount Cook and Alps eclipse Switzerland"—thus he summed up the scenery of New Zealand. This was not an idle compliment; it was the outcome of thought and observation by a man competent to judge.

My first voyage to England was a tedious business. Far-seeing parents sent me home on a big boat carrying only four passengers

and 100,000 carcasses of frozen mutton. I had to defeat the examiners of the "Little Go" at Cambridge in Greek, a language quite dead in New Zealand; and as I knew nothing about St Mark's Gospel in Greek or Latin Prose my parents deemed it wise to put me on board, Greek books and all, to work out my own salvation. It took the good ship *Delpic*—still doing the same old jaunt, I believe—six solid weeks to fetch Teneriffe. The only land we saw was St Paul's Rock, about 2000 miles from the mainland. We struck a real gale off Cape Horn. All the boats forward were smashed, and for a whole night and day we had to half steam ahead against the hurricane, which was accompanied by a fine sleet and frozen rain. While the gale was on our quarter the bridge on which I was allowed to spend most of my time frequently touched water. That storm off Cape Horn will never fade from memory.

The Colonial boy's first vision of London is extraordinary. Coming up from the

docks it is nothing but disillusionment, and the stories I had read seemed untrue. But on the journey westward St Paul's came to my rescue, and when I saw the Law Courts and the policemen on point duty in the Strand I put down the window of the cab and leaned my head out, anxious to miss nothing. My fellow-passenger, a prospective student for Edinburgh university, was also a stranger in London, and together we ventured into the promenade of one of the large music halls. That was my greatest surprise of all. I was not so much impressed with what went on on the stage as the varied types of humanity and the complete indifference of the women to most of the items on the programme.

My next experience was a cramming establishment at Hunstanton belonging to my good friend, Mr Hayter. There were a number of excellent courts and we played a great deal of tennis. At first I was very nervous. I feared lest my poor Colonial game might show up badly against the seasoned home players. But I need not

have had any qualms. Mr Hayter was far ahead of all his pupils, and I found I had considerably over-estimated the powers of my comrades. Indeed, I had quite a shock after we had played a few games. Mr Hayter told me that I ought to play for Cambridge. It was a great compliment, though he qualified it by adding that the average half Blue was rather a duffer.

Be this as it may, I won the Freshmen's Tournament in a canter. One of my rivals, I recollect, was F. G. Lowe, about as much in embryo then as I was myself. My first summer at Cambridge was devoted almost entirely to cricket. Trinity had an exceptionally strong eleven, including no less than seven Blues, and we were rather too strong for the other colleges. That fact did not spoil the fun. College cricket under any circumstances is a delightful pastime.

A feature about university life that struck me as a Colonial was the air of aloofness employed by undergrads in their dealings with one another. They stood so much on ceremony. To take an example. Trinity



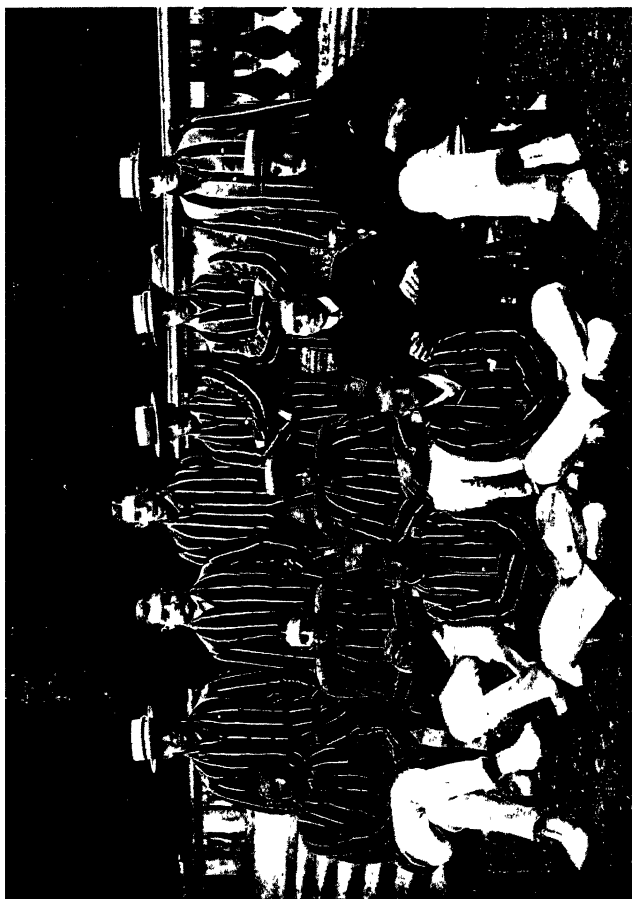
was playing a cricket match against Jesus. No Trinity man ever thought of speaking to one of his opponents, unless he had known him before or was introduced in the ordinary way.' I suppose this is why the custom prevails of giving each man his college when he is introduced ; it enables him to be placed on future occasions. But in New Zealand we should think such formality a waste of time.

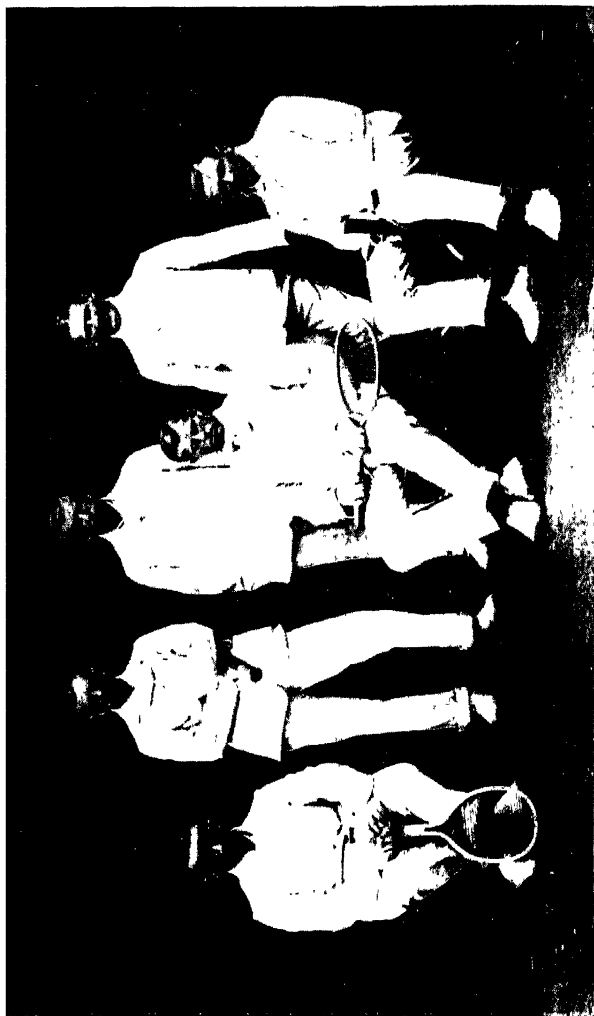
I cherish many friendships made during college days. They are the best and ought to be permanent—provided some discretion is exercised. The three or four years at a university is a very crucial start in life: there are so many temptations to bring out both the best and the worst in a man. From a schoolboy the freshman suddenly finds himself a man, with a banking account of his own and practically no restrictions on his private life. A horde of keen and knowing tradesmen press their goods on the youthful capitalist and show no desire whatever for a settlement. These worthy tradesmen will also accommodate the under-

graduate who is unfortunate enough to be short of "ready."

The average student cannot be accused of overworking his poor brain, though I have frequently met with sad cases of overwork on the physical side. To get a degree at either university entails little work, and interferes so little with games that any man ought to be ashamed to "come down" without having defeated the examiners in at least a pass degree. Even to the really ambitious an honours degree of the third class is not likely to entail brain fag. The fashion in vogue at Oxford and Cambridge of making every afternoon from two to four-thirty absolutely sacred to exercise is heartily to be commended. Such are the worst hours in the day for work and the best for play.

In my second year at Cambridge the committee of the 'Varsity Lawn Tennis Club prevailed upon me to chuck cricket and become their honorary secretary. The club at this period was in low water, financially as well as in other respects. For ten





*H. Chapple   C. E. Stuart   K. Powell   A. F. W.   R. G. Lowndes   A. Lang*

years the club had suffered a deficit large enough to cause depression. I had my work cut out. One of my first ideas was to arrange that the All England *v.* University Match should take place in May Week and to advertise it in a business-like way. Shall I be accused of boasting if I say that my two years of office not only wiped out the entire debt but gave the club a substantial balance? In those days we rented a ground which was neither very large nor provided very good turf; but now the C.U.L.T.C. have a delightful ground of their own at Fenner's. We played two or three 'Varsity matches a week and gained about seventeen wins against two losses. University teams vary enormously both as regards standard of play and in the keenness of the individuals. Our team of 1905 was not only very useful on the court, we all pulled together off it and trained hard. We were keen enough to indulge in systematic stroke practice. My partner was Kenneth Powell, then a freshman, and if I remember rightly the only match we lost

during the season was against the Dohertys.

With regard to team matches the success or failure depends on the team and not on individual merit. All must pull together. There is no room for petty jealousies. It would never do for the third pair to pray for the downfall of the second, and so on. I found it a most difficult matter to select a 'Varsity team. Doubles play a part as important as singles; it is necessary to put men together who have the ability and temperament to combine, and, what is even more important, imagine in their own minds that they play well together. Because, if they imagine themselves to be a rotten pair, nothing on earth will change that opinion. To ensure getting the very best available team I had a number of trials. For instance, it would come to my ears that a certain pair who had done excellent work in college matches thought they could beat the 'Varsity third pair. The 'Varsity third pair would be equally confident of their own superiority. So a friendly match would be



CAMBRIDGE MAY WEEK, 1906: THE DOHERTYS (ALL ENGLAND CLUB) AGAINST K. POWELL AND MYSELF





arranged, and if five shillings a corner were laid I offered no objection. By this method my third pair always earned their place on merit. Of course the result of these matches was not conclusive, but it aided the task of selection.

A tremendous amount of "patters," as tennis is popularly called, is played at the University, but we had better not inquire too delicately into the standard of play. Trinity College alone possessed fifty grass courts, and on a fine afternoon in the May term every court was occupied, and often by two successive doubles during the afternoon. Of course the low standard at the University is easily explained. The men have not played at the Public Schools, and of all games lawn tennis takes time and work to learn.

At both universities too much attention is paid to double play. Doubles are an art in themselves and call for all the skill necessary in a single, but the single game has two far-reaching advantages: it develops stamina and self-reliance and it affords

twice as much play over a given period. A double, especially if the participants be undergraduates, has a tendency to become a blend of tennis and chaff. But when two players moderately keen oppose each other in a single-handed contest they usually become so imbued with the competitive spirit that their minds are concentrated on the matter in hand.

The majority of 'Varsity matches consist of doubles only. A team is made up of three pairs, who play each of the other pairs. Our visiting teams at Cambridge had usually been travelling all the morning, and at two o'clock, a little rushed and out of breath, they found themselves opposed to hearty young undergrads whose only uncongenial employment had been half-an-hour's smoke with their coach, or if they happened to be of a very studious turn of mind a spell of lectures. The Cambridge courts in the early part of the season are usually about fifty per cent. faster than any others; our visitors, especially if they hailed from the north, were at a great disadvantage.

The University players practise together day after day ; they become better as pairs than as individuals. First-class players are very good in the regularity with which they come up to Cambridge, and I venture to hope that their day at Alma Mater is always made as pleasant as possible for them. In 1905 I had the honour of being the captain of both the Trinity and University Clubs. My partner was Kenneth Powell, who, though his tennis is hardly up to his hurdling, was one of the most reliable and delightful players I have ever been fortunate enough to support.

Cambridge has been the best nursery in England for lawn tennis. The Dohertys, the Allens, C. H. L. Cazalet, K. Powell, F. G. Lowe and other prominent players owe their early training to Cambridge. The Allens make a habit of spending every May term at Cambridge and the practice they give the players, in addition to affording manifold benefits, has prevented a succession of undergrads regarding themselves as infallible. During my Cambridge days I made

strenuous efforts to evolve a stylish back-hand and often sought the advice of E. R. Allen ; but though he would be delighted to play and beat me as often as I liked he would never advise. " Nourishing a viper, I call it," was all I could ever get out of him. In their turn of " Fun on a Tennis Court " the Allens never failed to delight a Cambridge crowd.

Though it does not bear on tennis, I should like to give a brief description of how *L'Entente Cordiale* was cemented, an episode that enabled those who were present to bear the strain recently imposed by affairs in Morocco. The best French Rugby Football Club was visiting Cambridge to play against Trinity. Some of our players were crocked, so we borrowed a few " Blues " from the other colleges. The match was a splendid one and we lost by a single point. My memories of it are painful, as I played all the way through the second spell with a dislocated third finger which gave me hell. Decugis, the French lawn tennis champion, was running up and down the touch-line in

a huge state of excitement. Ranking very little less in public importance to the match was the dinner. Two lecture-rooms had been knocked into one in the Trinity Great Court, and I well remember the brains and energy expended in choosing the menu and in making arrangements for what was to be, for Trinity at any rate, a historic occasion. At the dinner, as can be imagined, the *entente cordiale* theme was very prominent. Afterwards we discovered a little four-wheeled coach used for conveying the Master of Trinity's guests from the lodge to his house. This little vehicle was soon filled—roof and all—with our guests, and was raced round the quadrangle wobbling in a most alarming manner. The result was inevitable: a curb was struck and in a very few seconds Frenchmen, academical gowns, bits of coach were all wallowing on the floor. A rush was then made for the brakes waiting to convey our visitors to the station, as some of them had to get the train to London and Paris. However, we were exactly one hour too late for the last train, so the entire

company adjourned to the theatre. Our advent was greeted with prolonged cheers and with a supreme disregard for the performance. Many impassioned speeches were made, and continued to be made throughout the evening. One burly Frenchman, making more noise than all the rest put together, was threatened by a frail-looking "chucker-out." Very slowly and very gravely he stood up on his seat, and, thumping a huge chest, addressed the entire house in a solemn voice, glancing significantly meanwhile at the little man. "I am ze champion of all ze French az ze box," he began. This was greeted with vociferous applause, and the "chucker-out" somehow sank out of sight. It was very difficult to keep the audience off the stage. I'm afraid we were all rather irresponsible.

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## CHAPTER VI

### MY CHAMPIONSHIP EXPERIENCES

BY “Championship” of course I refer to Wimbledon. Other arenas may draw larger and more demonstrative crowds—Melbourne, Sydney, Johannesburg, and Newport, for example—but there is no place so hallowed as the centre court of the All England Club, and no championship so worth striving for or so highly prized as the World’s Championship at Wimbledon.

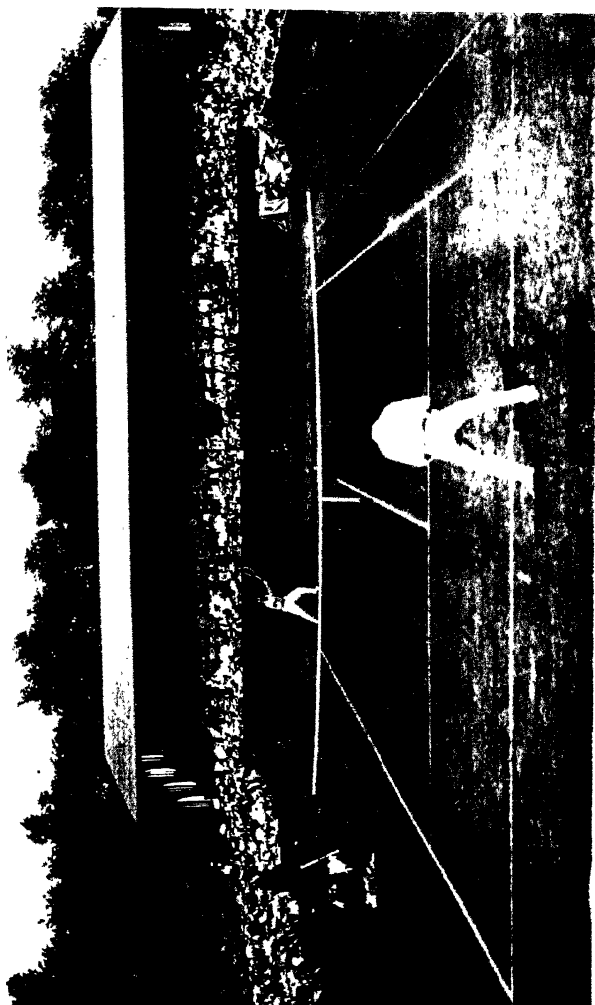
I recall very vividly the first match I ever saw on those famous lawns. It was between poor H. S. Mahony and G. L. Orme in 1903. The friend who had taken me to Wimbledon, saying that he knew Mahony, offered me level money that he would be wearing odd socks, and made me a further bet that neither sock would belong to the genial Irishman. Just before play began my friend, evidently on intimate terms with

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the great man, called him up and said, "Let me have a look at your socks, Harold." To my surprise (that was before I knew Mahony) one sock was marked "R.F.D." and the other with less famous initials that were certainly not "H.S.M."

At the time I wondered if I would ever have the pluck to enter for Wimbledon, for the play seemed to me then nothing short of wonderful. Yet the following year I was battling on my own, and who should I meet in the second round but the man with the odd socks! To my great delight I captured a set and made Mahony talk to himself a great deal. I struggled along well the two following years until I met A. W. Gore, who carried too many guns and by mercilessly attacking my backhand from first to last wore down any attack I may have started with. I generally got away at first against him, and on two or three occasions had two sets to my credit, only to ultimately succumb. His pluck and pertinacity on these occasions always appealed to me.





*J. H. Gore*      *A. E. H.*

SEMI-FINAL OF THE RYE CLAYTONS TENNIS TOURNAMENT



NORMAN E. BROOKES

## CHAMPIONSHIP EXPERIENCES III

The year that Gore beat me in the semi-final—1906, I think—I played the longest single of my life. My opponent was W. J. Clothier, of America, a fine, loose-limbed man with the frame of a Guardsman. He had me two sets up and five games to two and 40-15—a pretty tight corner for any man. However, I enjoyed a little luck, the tide began to turn, and altogether we played three hours and twenty-nine minutes. I won the final set at 12-10. I remember feeling at the finish that I could have gone on for another set.

My next Wimbledon I met Beals Wright in the very first round. He had just arrived to take part in the Davis Cup matches, and, thanks to the fact that he was not properly acclimatized, I won by three sets to one. Beals did not go all out that day, I fancy. The following day I had an even stiffer proposition—my friend and colleague, Norman Brookes, who was ultimately to win the title. We played one of the fastest matches I have ever waged, the tennis being very fair. We got two sets all

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and three games all in the final set, when I dropped my service. That meant good-bye to any chance of the Championship in 1907. However, Brookes and I won the doubles comfortably, and, if my memory serves me rightly, we didn't drop a single set, beating the Americans, Beals Wright and Karl Behr, in the final. So much has been said about our defeat in the subsequent Davis Cup Doubles and so little about our decent performances in England and Australia that I believe we are rather underrated in England. Nevertheless, I would prefer Brookes by my side to any other living player.

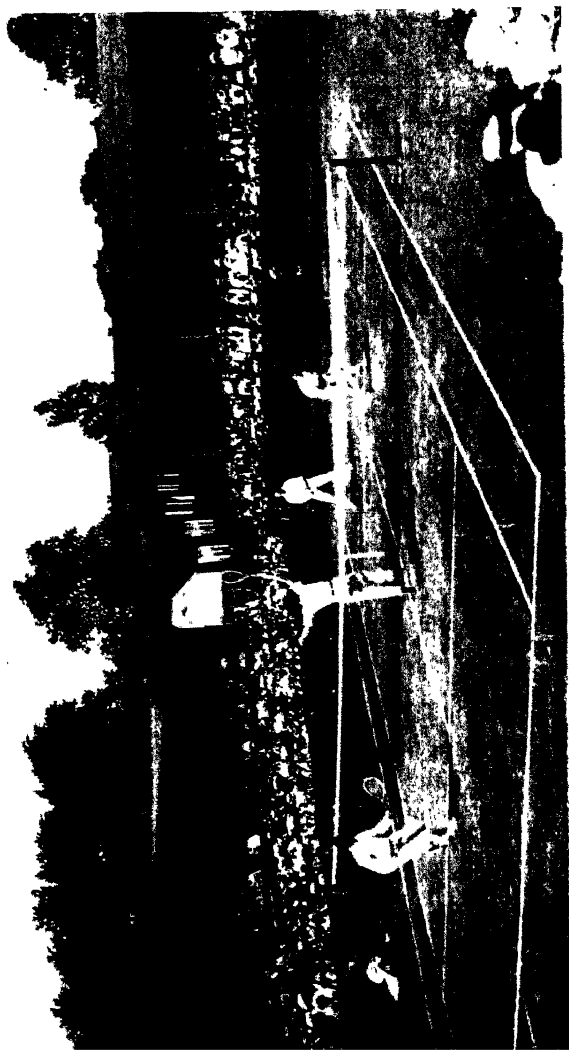
Norman Brookes is, indeed, my favourite partner and the opponent by whom it gives me least pain to be defeated. He learnt all his tennis in Australia, and to Dr Eaves in large measure must be given the credit for bringing him up to his wonderfully high standard. The "doctor" initiated him into the mysteries of the American service, and, as all the tennis world knows, Brookes made the ball "talk" to such an extent that when he came home for the first time, in 1905, such

prominent English players as Frank Riseley, Hillyard, Gore and Ball-Greene could make neither head nor tail of him. Brookes is probably the only instance of a player winning the World's Championship with local practice. In his early days at Melbourne virtually his only opponent was his brother, to whom he could easily give half-thirty and a beating. A more versatile games man I have seldom met. He can make his hundred break at billiards fairly regularly. He is on or near the plus mark at golf. He was one of the finest left-hand schoolboy bowlers in Australia, and if he had stuck to cricket his appearance in test matches must only have been a question of time. I remember staying with Brookes at his home in Melbourne when the Croquet Championship of Australia happened to be taking place. Brookes invited the winner to play him a match on Sunday, and a dreadful act of sacrilege was committed—the tennis court was marked out for croquet. The champion came, saw and was badly defeated. A keen motorist—though he

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always shuns my motor bikes as he would the devil—Brookes possesses two big F.I.A.T.'s, which he drives himself with consummate skill. But then the Brookes family is by way of being abnormal. One brother is nearly as strong as Sandow and Miss Brookes has a voice almost as fine and well trained as Melba's. A sister of Brookes, by the way, married Mr Deakin, ex-Prime Minister of Australia. As a partner Brookes is not always tranquil. He occasionally does those things you don't expect him to do and leaves undone others which you anticipate. But once understand him and no man can wish for finer support. He invariably says what he thinks—a frankness so often construed into conceit. He is married now and my one prayer is that domesticity won't keep him off the court.

In 1908 I had a fairly smooth journey to the fifth round of the Championship, but at that stage any further progress was peremptorily barred by the energetic figure and nimble brain of Roper Barrett. I won the first set with something to spare, but in the



*Redd Wright*

*K. Bohr*

*A. F. W.*

*N. E. Brookes*



MR. J. G. RITCHIE



second I began to go to pieces, and by the time the fourth had arrived I wasn't worth a dog's chance. Roper Barrett is probably the cleverest player living. He is so wonderfully quick about the court, so eager to seize the smallest opening, almost uncanny in his powers of anticipating. His volleying is versatile and sound, but I rate his generalship higher than I do his strokes.

Once more I had to console myself with the doubles. My partner on this occasion was Ritchie, to whose splendid spade work, rare tenacity and sound judgment, especially in a crisis, I, knowing his good qualities at first hand, can testify. We played together consistently for three years, twice winning the Championship at Wimbledon. and until last July in the challenge round at Wimbledon had never been beaten. I recall that we got the better of the Dohertys in the final at Nice—a match over the result of which a good many of the prophets, ignorant of the fact that R. F. Doherty was much below par, had their reputations shaken and their pockets drained.

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I suppose the nearest shave Ritchie and I experienced was in the final at Wimbledon in 1908, when our opponents were Gore and Roper Barrett. It was an extraordinary match, for in the first two sets we only lost three games and in the next two we could only win two. The crowd were cheering the rally of the so-called veterans to the echo. Their applause was louder still when Barrett and Gore, moving forward gaily on the flowing tide, took the first two games in the final set. But both my partner and myself had a little kick left, and it was at this crisis more than any other that I appreciated Ritchie's supreme steadiness. His lobs were so well timed and so judiciously placed that Barrett was continuously seeing a balloon go over his head, while Gore was forced to run from corner to corner on the base-line. Those tosses, at such a time—and, I am almost ashamed to add, in such a sun—were of priceless value and one of them, perhaps the best of all, won the match in the sixteenth game, after our opponents, fighting grimly

to the end, twice held the 'vantage game.

In a single—and I have played him dozens of times both at home and abroad—Ritchie is the essence of steadiness—I had almost written old-fashioned steadiness. He is always a dangerous man to strike, especially if one is a little below one's best. His bad strokes are few and far between, and he rarely fails to take advantage of his opponent's mistakes. Though a made player, as distinct from a natural player, his drives are sound in structure and design and he is particularly adroit at passing a man who comes up on the wrong ball. Spectators generally regard him as being slow about the court—a fallacious impression. Once roused, no player can "gad" about so quickly.

In 1909 I was being called to the New Zealand bar, but in 1910 I came home again. My father was quite keen for me to have another shot at the Wimbledon target.

Thus it came about that in January I left my native shores. South Africa was *en*

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*route* for England so I stopped at Durban and ran up to Johannesburg for the South African championship. My voyage took over eight weeks, a coal strike in Australia making us five weeks overdue. I thoroughly enjoyed myself in South Africa and just managed to win. But I was not at all confident about the result. Straight from a voyage of eight weeks to the glare of a Johannesburg tennis court and the whirligig of life on the Rand is a change difficult to imagine. It had been a long and tedious voyage with very few passengers to enliven the trip, and more from the need of keeping myself occupied I trained hard. Punch ball, skipping and, before breakfast, a pyjama gymnasium class, of which I was honorary instructor, all served to keep me fit. I also gazed at the sun for a fixed period every day to accustom myself to its hot rays and, in order to keep my grip "green," I waved a tennis racket about on the top deck. Yes, I think I deserved to win that South African championship.

My stay in Johannesburg was absolutely

delightful and I never wish to meet a finer school of sportsmen than those with whom I came in contact. The Motor Cycle Club escorted me over to Pretoria, where we all lunched together and made motor bike speeches to celebrate the occasion. Then we adjourned to the tennis courts and had some good doubles. To finish a fine day we raced back on our machines to Johannesburg. Dreadful to relate, all this happened on a Sunday.

On the way to the Cape I stayed a day and a night at Kimberley. Local experts combined with the weather to make me excessively hot, the tennis there being medium. But of course the "draw" at Kimberley are the diamonds. The board-room of the De Beers office, round which I was taken, is a veritable diamond museum. Yet I confess I was very disappointed with the unpolished diamond. For all the world it looks like a dull pebble picked up haphazard from the seashore. Judging from the size of some of the diamonds rescued from the insides of adventurous kaffirs, the

thieves deserved a happier fate than that which actually befell them. The system of catching the diamonds is at once novel and simple. Some genius discovered that water and stones will run over grease without sticking but that a diamond gets caught every time. This simple principle is now universally adopted. The stones are all crushed to a workable size and then mixed with water and run over large open shifting trays. The net result is that the water and stones run away and the diamonds remain on the grease. But the largest diamonds rarely reach the crushing machines. They are either captured in the mine or picked up on the flow by natives, to whom liberal commission is paid. More interesting even than diamonds is the De Beers stud farm—the best in South Africa. At Cape Town I had some more tennis and immensely enjoyed motoring round the mountains and to other places which really are intensely interesting. I formed a very high opinion of the beauties of Cape Town.

The voyage home on the *Saxon* was un-

eventful except for a catastrophe which occurred near the Canary Isles : my punch ball responded to an extra hard smack by flying over the life-boats and so into the sea. In vain I tried to improvise another. The sports proved a veritable triumph for Father Kelly of Bloemfontein. He was travelling in the second saloon, and as both classes combined for these sports a little friendly rivalry existed. But no one on our side could stand up to Kelly, who towered head and shoulders above everyone at all these games. He swung the monkey farther than anyone else. None of our heroes could sit on the bar for thirty seconds without Father Kelly dealing him a blow with the pillow that sent him spinning. Some months later I was playing the final of the London Covered Court Championship and who should I see up in the gallery but the hero of the pillow fights. He had taken the trouble to come all the way up to Queen's to see me play.

But to come to the Wimbledon meeting of 1910. Any luck the draw could bestow did

not come my way. Indeed, I was fated to draw Roper Barrett in the very first round—one of my most dangerous opponents, and the man who had last beaten me, two years ago, in England. Moreover, the centre court, especially after its extensive alterations, was a most demoralizing arena in which to play a first match. The background, light and general atmosphere, were all changed. In this particular match conditions were made more difficult than usual, for it was sunny and windy. I was very much disconcerted at first. Playing from the town end I was forced by the rays of the sun to keep back. Directly rushing tactics were adopted my opponent would cleverly lob, and, as everyone knows, it is quite impossible to smash accurately and well with the sun shining straight into one's eyes, especially as air pockets (to borrow an aeroplane term) kept issuing from the passage between the two stands. However, fortune was on my side. After losing the first set I became more accustomed to the strange conditions, and won the match



4-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-4. And very pleased I was !

My next opponent was my friend, J. B. Ward, who only bothered to win one game in the three sets. The third round put me against an old opponent, M. J. G. Ritchie. At first all went well, but in the third set Ritchie pulled himself together and, playing very well, won it at 7-5. The last set I won at 6-2. The fourth round was not so difficult and I managed to win all three sets against McNair without losing a game. Keen is hardly a strong enough word to describe my enthusiasm at the time, and if straining every nerve and making every effort to win I could have defeated my opponent by more than 6-0, 6-0, 6-0, I would have done so. When well trained and in good form I'm sure it is policy to go in and play every stroke as if your very life depended upon it.

In the fifth round I met Froitzheim and I believe many judges prophesied a close match. But playing tennis interposed with too many dinners and dances at Homburg is

a very different matter to playing for the championship at Wimbledon. Froitzheim no doubt found me a very different player to the man he had beaten in Germany a year before. The match does not call for much mention except that I only came to the net on something good, and studiously avoided giving my opponent angles from which to make his wonderfully accurate passing shots. If you intend to volley a player like the German champion you must keep him in the centre of the court. The match ended 6-1, 6-2, 6-1.

In the semi-final my opponent was J. C. Parke, the Irish champion. He is a good lawn tennis player but an even better footballer and was the treasured possession of all representative Irish fifteens. In fact, his lawn tennis is reminiscent of Rugby football. On this occasion he fairly took my breath away for the first few games, and before I fully realized what was happening was leading by four games to one. Luckily I was able to make a recovery and to win the set at 7-5. The last two sets were not

so close and I took them 6-2, 6-1. Parke tries a little too much and feels the want of a really reliable backhand ; but he is wonderfully active and executes brilliant strokes from all quarters.

My final against Beals Wright proved a long and very interesting match to play—whatever it may have been to watch. I lost the first two sets 6-4, 6-4. Both were very close and might have been won by either of us. I was forty love in the tenth game of the first set and lost it. During this early stage of the match I stayed at the back of the court more than usual and as far as possible saved myself. I had proved before to my own satisfaction that it was possible to get the better of my good friend Beals by hustling up to the net, thereby depriving him of his only really dangerous weapon of attack—his volleying. But I had also come to the conclusion that it was nearly impossible to start hustling a man like Wright and to keep it up to the end. When I had last met Wright in Australia I hustled at first and paid the penalty. At

Wimbledon I kept the hustle for the end. My tactics may have been right or they may have been wrong ; they were, at all events, profitable in this particular match. Throughout the entire contest, I felt fairly confident. I knew that Wright's close quarter attack, maintained at such a high pressure, must weaken in the third set if I could only give him enough to do. Once I forced him to drop back, as drop back he did, I felt my chance would come. Several spectators of this match seemed to think—judging by their subsequent remarks—that I won solely on condition. Perhaps I may be allowed to quote the special correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, who, writing on the morrow of the final, said :

“ The secret of Wilding's victory was, I think, the husbanding of his strength, the ‘ holding himself in ’ during the first two sets. He discovered it in Australia pitted against Wright himself in 1908 and Brookes in 1909. It is a secret that H. L. Doherty found out and employed with great success

in the past. Applied to American and Colonial volleyers who follow their service to the net, put plainly, it is this—give them enough rope and they will hang themselves. In other words, let them drain their resources in the first two sets, encourage them by a stout resistance to go all out ; but keep a little something in reserve for the third set, when the hustling campaign is bound to exact its penalty. As I say, Wilding had all this impressed on his mind after his two Australian matches. Against Wright, at Melbourne, he hustled for all he was worth in the first two sets, and was himself a spent force at the crisis. Against Brookes, in the final of the Victorian Championship, he tried the experiment of more physical restraint. It succeeded beyond his hopes. Brookes won the first two sets, Wilding the next three. So at Wimbledon yesterday. You may say Wilding won on condition. That is only partly true. He won because, like a sagacious commissariat officer, he apportioned his resources over five sets instead of three. He stood his

ground in the thick of the American bombardment and when the ammunition of his antagonist had run dry he had enough strength and powder left to capture the fort."

Let me add here that I consider Beals Wright one of the finest sportsmen it has ever been my good fortune to be defeated by and in turn defeat. A tryer from first to last, invariably keen, he takes victory and defeat with the same smiling grace. If his ground strokes were equal to his wonderful volleying and his service, there is not a player born who could beat him. His lobbing is perfect in height and pitch, and to a certain extent he can protect his base-line with this stroke. But though his chop stroke off the ground is difficult to hammer, and contributes to his volleying success, it is not severe or accurate enough to keep him for any length of time at the back of the court. But he is a fine natural player with one of the cheeriest dispositions and one of the stoutest hearts in the world.

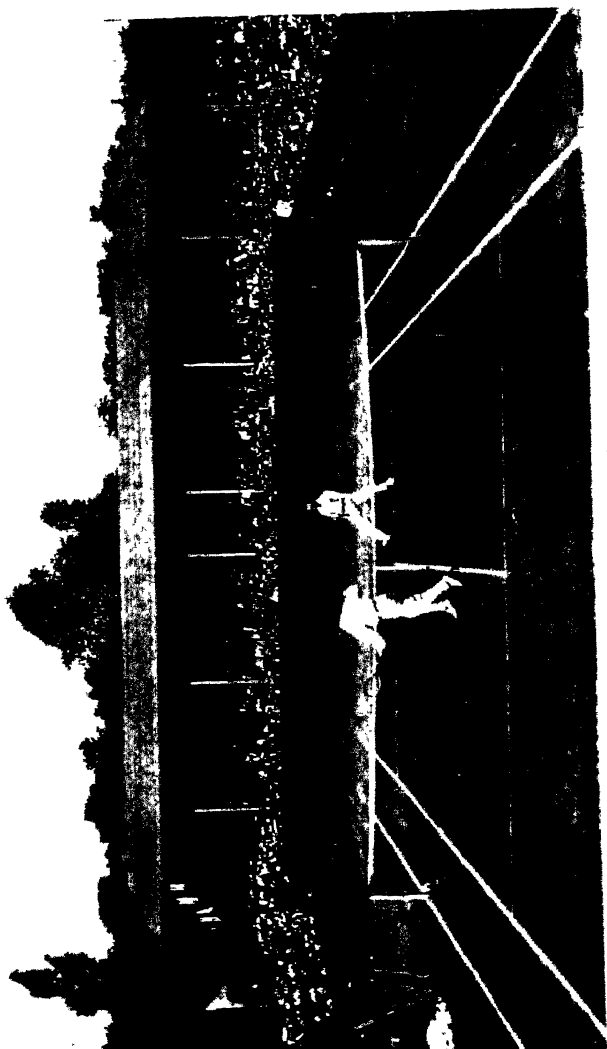
In the challenge round I met A. W. Gore. It was freely proclaimed by Gore's friends, and even hinted at by Gore himself, that he was right "out of form." Fortunately I took no notice of these remarks, so was not at all surprised to find him the same tough proposition I had been up against on countless previous occasions. The most pertinacious player living, he goes hard all the time—you have never got him. I may not admire his style, but I have always admired his pluck. Only once have I partnered him in doubles, at Leicester in 1906, and then we came within a point of beating the Doherty brothers.

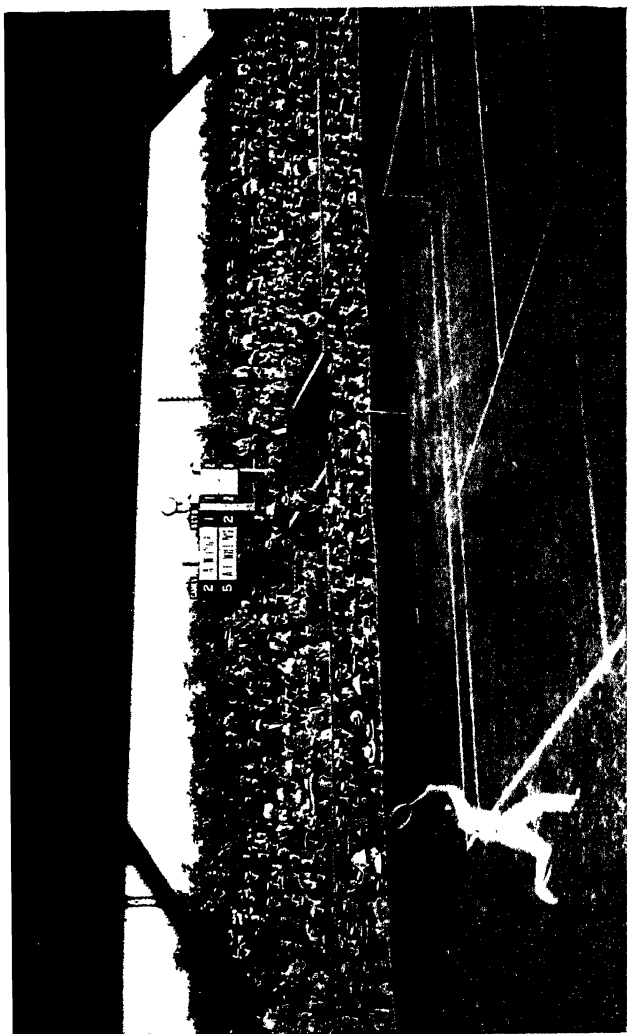
Gore started well, getting in his forehand drive with alarming frequency. In fact, he played as finely as he had ever done before against me. He led in the first set by four games to one; but the Fates were kind and I managed to win that bout at 6-4. The second set was very close and I just won it at 7-5. In the third set Gore tired a little and, no doubt profiting by the declining vigour of his drives, I got going

much better and led by four games to two. At that point one of those heavy rainstorms for which Wimbledon is famous suddenly descended. A quarter of an hour's halt was called; we had to wait and shiver in the wings. You may imagine what that pause meant to one who felt he had the Championship in his grasp. When we resumed the court had a greasy surface. Gore got to work well and won the next six games off the reel—that is, the set at 6-4. The court was very much against me. Weighing thirteen stone two, it was impossible to skip about a greasy court, shod in light rubber shoes, with the same degree of activity that ought to be displayed by a man of ten stone. However, the court improved, and fortunately I did not get unduly cast down. I won the last set by six games to two.

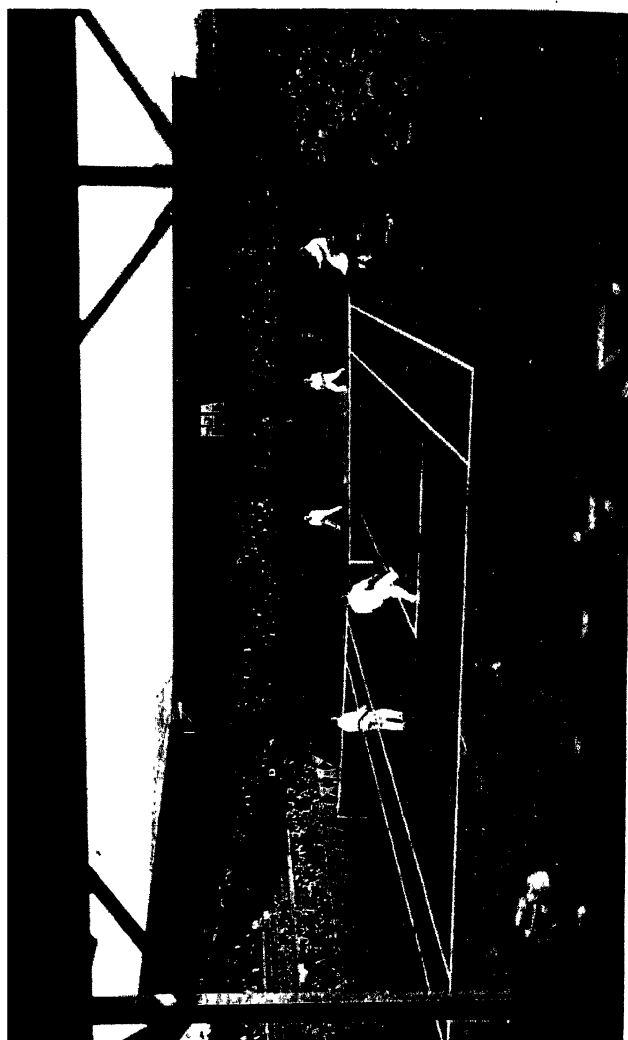
Needless to say, I was relieved when the last stroke was won. I had experienced considerable mental strain, enhanced by the fact that I had come all the way from New Zealand for this one event. My chief de-











light was in knowing the joy it would give my father and mother in New Zealand. Such a result had always been their ambition. I fondly believe that if I had been elected Prime Minister of England it could not have given them more pleasure. In large communities that prevail in England one can hardly realize the wonderful *esprit de corps* existing in a little country like New Zealand. Winning a lawn tennis championship is really a very small performance, but every friend in that country, from the Prime Minister downwards, cabled me his delight.

Any success I have enjoyed at Wimbledon has been due to my kind hostess, Mrs Horn, of Wimbledon Park House. She would never permit me to go near the beloved motor cycle. Long before I developed any symptoms of a cold my head was pushed into a eucalyptus bath. All the good things to eat and drink were "tāpu," as the Maoris say. Nor was I ever allowed to forget bed-time or seven A.M. Little wonder therefore that I have never been so fit before or since. I had a difficult draw, but, being

fit, I rather liked it than otherwise. The final against Beals Wright was the only match over which I had any anxious moments, but even then I felt fairly happy.

The less said the better about the challenge round of 1911. The heat was abnormal—the thermometer stood at 88° F.—and the play very bad in consequence. The match was a great disappointment alike to players and spectators. Roper Barrett had had enough after four sets—so had I—but he “chucked it” first. The court, entirely shut in, and surrounded by people, closely resembled a baker’s oven. Personally I had done everything in my power to enter the lists fit, but I candidly confess to being more or less a victim to the heat. At no time during this match could I follow a single service up to the net. Tactics hardly existed. Get the ball back somewhere and somehow was almost the height of our ambitions. Barrett’s success lies in placing and dropping balls short and he played his usual game,

only minus about 80 per cent. of his usual agility. During the match I probably ran some five miles farther than he did, conditions favouring rather than otherwise his style of game. I occasionally marvelled at Barrett's wonderful endurance under those altogether normal conditions, but had little mind for reflection. Davis Cup matches in the tropical heat of Australia (96° F. in the shade, to be precise) were to my mind not nearly so trying as last year's challenge round at Wimbledon. Probably under normal conditions Mr Barrett and I would last equally well, but what is entirely beyond my comprehension is that, suffering from illness, he could go on as he did. His scratching came as a great surprise to me, as I hardly thought it was possible for him to be more "baked" than I myself felt during the entire course of the match. I attribute the very mediocre tennis displayed by both of us entirely to the conditions. To affirm that the heat only affected one party is unfair and untrue.

So many diverse opinions have been ad-

vanced on the question of "playing through" at Wimbledon that I should like to express my views regarding it. I may emphasize one point, which in my opinion is the keynote to the whole affair. The holder and the challenger are not confronted with equal risks of defeat. I presume the object of the Championship is to decide which is the best player of the year. That being so, surely all players should start under the same conditions, and, as nearly as practical in a knock-out event, run equal chances of being "quitted." But how can the conditions be called fair when the challenger has eight matches to win and the holder one to gain the same end—*i.e.* the Championship for the year? It is for this reason, and not because of the physical strain, about which so much exaggerated twaddle has been written, that I give my vote for the holder playing through. Physical strain there undoubtedly is, but not so much as critics and so-called judges would have us suppose.

An all-important fact on which sufficient



stress has never been laid is that no player can be called upon to play more than one match during a day. From personal experience, and from observation of others, I am convinced it is a succession of matches on the one day that brings on staleness, physical exhaustion and other tennis ills. One hard match a day, with an occasional double thrown in, and this only when the player feels inclined, ought never to affect a trained man, mentally or physically. But give a man one match in the morning and two in the afternoon for a couple of weeks ; then staleness, accompanied by all the other tennis maladies, will very quickly result. Up to the present, the average first-class lawn tennis player has hardly given a thought to training. If players who desire to gain the highest laurels at Wimbledon would embark upon a scientific course of preparation less would be heard of their physical collapse. A collapse brought about by what ? By playing one match a day for two weeks, with a complete no-play rest on Sundays and on the day before the challenge

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round? I honestly believe, provided a little trouble and care are exercised, that the average player can come up for the challenge round better for a really hard struggle than he was on the opening day. But the time has come when a player, if he wishes to be successful, must train, and train systematically. It is too ridiculous to picture a prizefighter entering the ring trained in a like manner to some of our Wimbledon stars. The modern tendency in lawn tennis is to make the game faster; it may not be such an accurate style as that adopted by the giants of yesterday, but strenuous it is, without a doubt. The essence of the game as played by the rising Continental and American players is to attack—not attack as fancy calls, but to attack hard from the first stroke to the last and never slack off for an instant. Here it is that the trained athlete has an incalculable advantage. A possible explanation of the unpopularity of training among tennis players may be that a vast majority of matches are decided on skill alone. Physical

attributes only become apparent when players of equal, or nearly equal, calibre are opposed. During the progress of the All-Comers at Wimbledon neither of the ultimate finalists is likely to be thoroughly extended in more than two or three matches at the very utmost.

What about the mental aspect? Here temperament is everything, but I don't think many players handicap themselves much on this score. Certainly one man will sleep like a top on the eve of meeting a dreaded rival on the centre court, while another, under similar conditions, will spend the whole night tossing among the bed-clothes, missing easy smashes and making double faults in his dreams. But here again the thoughtful and careful man who has taken the trouble to fit himself for his task comes out on top. If players will get themselves into perfect health and training they will probably sleep as soundly before a match as at any other time. The worry of playing day after day what, for length and anxiety, is the equivalent of an ordinary

final, must naturally jag the nerves of the challenger a little. But to counterbalance this, a player meeting with success day after day on the same court and under the same conditions plays himself in, and gains great confidence. It is unnecessary to point out what a wonderful asset confidence is. Further, the challenger also gets thoroughly acclimatized to his surroundings.

Now let us turn to the holder, and briefly summarize his preparation. It is only fair and just that the authorities should allow the holder to practise in the morning on the almost sacred centre court. But play is only permitted when the court is absolutely dry, and then only for a limited time. These rules are quite fair and I agree with them. Practice, however, no matter what its severity, is not the same thing as a match. The morning and afternoon lights are absolutely different. During a match the people in the stands and the puzzling position of the sun (a blemish which really spoils the centre court in sunny weather)

make the atmosphere, light and surroundings those of another sphere from the serene and quiet morning.

It will be apparent from what I have endeavoured to say that in my view (1) Far too much importance is attached to the supposed advantage held by the holder who waits for a challenge, and (2) that in normal circumstances it may more often be found that it is the challenger who is really favoured by the present conditions. While these are my views yet I must say that I am strongly in favour of all conditions being equal for everyone. Whether the holder or challenger has an advantage on the day of the challenge round is not the point upon which I base this view. Probably in one case it would favour the holder, and in another the challenger.

Having given expression to such an opinion I am anxious to go further. If the All England Club will bring about this altogether desirable change, I, as champion for 1911, am willing to assist them in every possible way that lies in my power. If

resigning the championship would facilitate matters nothing would give me greater pleasure.

Closely allied to the subject of " Shall the holder play through ? " is another equally important question, " Shall the draw be arranged ? " The scheme of arranging the draw is not an original idea in theory or practice. As a matter of fact, it has been adopted regularly and clandestinely for years by the committee of many leading tournaments both at home and abroad. But while the All England Club proposed to " arrange " the draw, the delinquents in the past have always been accused of " seeding." Arranging or " seeding " is a distinction without any material difference.

For the draw of the most important tennis event in the world, numbering among its entries the champions of quite a dozen countries, to be arranged at all appears to me contrary to the best interests of lawn tennis. If the suggested arrangement were ever admitted at Wimbledon all other tour-

naments, large and small, would necessarily "arrange." Where an entry is made up of twenty-five players, only two of whom have any earthly chance of winning, it makes no difference to the ultimate result whether they meet in the first round or in the final. Of course there may be a difference in the gate receipts at the end of the week. As the promoters of any tournament know, it is highly desirable from a financial point of view to have the best final—*i.e.* an encounter between two players having the greatest reputation. Yet I don't think that point should weigh.

In the case of two first-class players it may be hard luck if the Fates decree that they should meet in an early round; but the more even the entry the less chance there is of an unsatisfactory final. To leave the arrangement of the draw to a combination of chance on the one hand and arbitrary arrangement by a committee on the other does not appear to me right. Of course the ideal way to obtain a true result is for every player to play against everyone else; but

that method is naturally out of the question owing to the enormous entry. Players come from all parts of the world to participate in the championships.

By "arranging" much righteous discontent would be bred, especially in the smaller tournaments. Players themselves and the "arrange" committee would often be at variance in opinion as regards the question of standard; accusations of favouritism would be rife. If positions are drawn, players may grumble a little at their bad luck, but I have never heard the grumbling extend to the proposal that the draw should be arranged, even by a method of selection based on form.

To my mind the present system of drawing is absolutely fair, and, unless extraneous circumstances arise which could not be considered in the "arrange" idea, the best man wins. No player has ever or is ever likely to win or lose the Championship through the draw. As a matter of fact, whether the draw is arranged at Wimbledon or not could make very little difference to



the ultimate result ; but taking all circumstances into consideration I am very much in favour of a fair and square draw as in the past.

And now, finally, I should like to make a suggestion in respect to the Championship. On the somewhat rare occasions that the sun does shine the light in the centre court at Wimbledon is nothing more or less than a scandal. Playing from the town end the sun shines almost directly in the player's eyes and makes volleying and overhead work doubly difficult. A player can, if so minded, make use of the sun to such an extent as to practically compel his opponent to refrain from volleying. Why more attention has not been drawn to this great defect in an otherwise perfect court is beyond my comprehension. As it is obviously impossible to alter the lie of the court without demolishing the stands, my suggestion is that some sort of a shield for the sun should be devised. I once played on a private court at Wiesbaden which was thus equipped and I believe they are freely employed in

India. In Wimbledon it would only be necessary to have one shield—*i.e.* at the south-west corner. It should not be difficult to design and fit up such a device.

## CHAPTER VII

### MAINLY ABOUT TOURNAMENTS

AT the outset let me make a confession. I prefer the Continental tournaments to those held in England. Except in exceptional summers like that of 1911 our climate does not allow the full enjoyment of a tennis tournament. Bad weather in England means bad courts ; but on the Continent a few hours to dry and the surface is better and firmer than ever.

~~Another important aspect from a player's~~ point of view is the dreary business-like air so often pervading English meetings. The referee does not ask ; he orders. And then the players themselves are apt to overestimate the serious character of their matches. On the Continent players mean to enjoy themselves in addition to playing tennis. Some of that lightheartedness may be now passing away. So much talent has

lately ripened in the ranks of Continental players that any intruder wishing to hold his own must needs be serious. The younger school across the Channel are in deadly earnest and leave no stone unturned in their efforts to win. Nevertheless, bright sunshine, fast dry courts to play on, a good restaurant to dine at, a casino, good music, and various other diversions in non-playing hours are infinitely to be preferred to the doubtful attractions of the average English watering-town.

Of course, an order of play is part and parcel of the Continental tournament scheme. By this boon every competitor may divert himself as he chooses when his presence is not actually required on court. At an English tournament players are often compelled to shiver under a tree praying that their names may be shouted through a megaphone. The only alternative is to go and worry an overburdened referee, who is, one may assume, doing his little best. Abroad tournaments continue in full swing on Sundays, an advantage which naturally

relieves congestion. . . . But I must stop these invidious distinctions or I shall never be able to show my face again at an English meeting.

Of all English tournaments I think the most deservedly popular is Eastbourne. Eastbourne is an attractive place; the courts are good; the tournament is excellently handled considering the unwieldy number of competitors; and lastly, there is something to do "in and between." Bear in mind that the average player has only a few weeks in the year for tournaments. Good tennis is the first consideration, but after a day's play, which may be a day's hard labour, he naturally likes to alleviate his soul in some mild frivolity. Therefore, in meeting his demands the Eastbourne organizers know their business. The Devonshire Park Orchestra give their fiddles an extra tune. Miss Margaret Cooper sings her latest songs in her latest manner. Fireworks are let off regardless of expense. The kinematograph faithfully portrays the Allen brothers. There is danc-

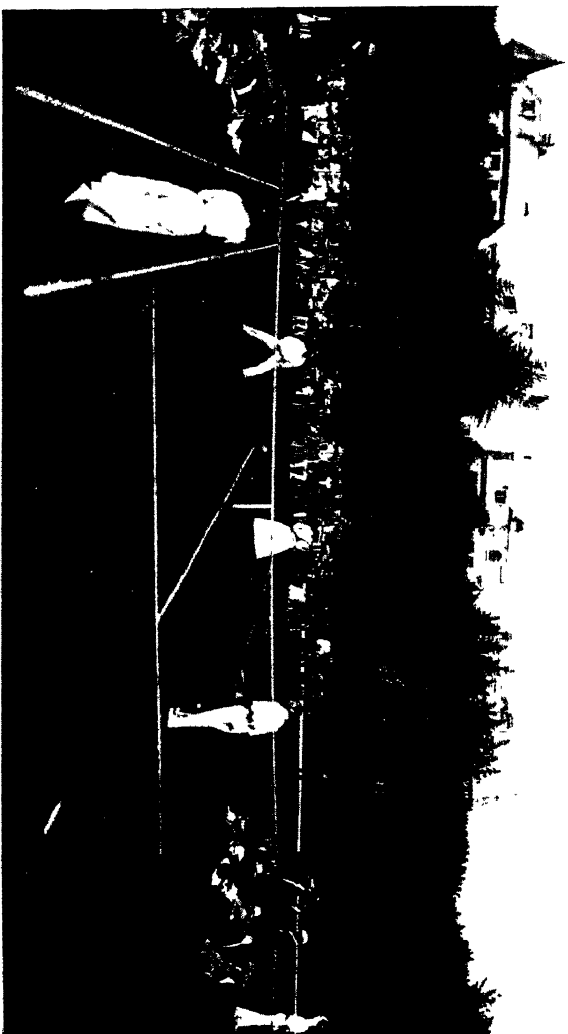
ing at the Grand Hotel, and altogether the week is one calculated to instil gaiety into young and old.

I do not for a second assert that many tournaments held in various parts of the United Kingdom are not quite as enjoyable in every respect as Eastbourne. I mention Eastbourne because I have on several occasions had the pleasure of playing there.

Another English meeting extending a hearty welcome to the visiting player is Newcastle-on-Tyne. I have very pleasant recollections of Newcastle because it was here, at the untutored age of nineteen, I, so to speak, planted my feet firmly on English turf. There were many big guns booming on the Tyne that year, but I managed to silence those of C. H. Martin and W. V. Eaves, after a desperate effort, and I nearly, but not quite—for my backhand then was an unreliable weapon—knocked out S. H. Smith. I hope I may recall these facts without immodesty. They help to impress on my mind the sporting attitude of the Newcastle crowd and the courtesy, *bon-*



THE SPOILS OF WAR: RECEIVING THE HONORARY CAP, 1907



Miss D. K. Ponglav      E. K. Allen      Miss P. W. Thomson      J. P. W.  
FINAL OF OPEN MIXED DOUBLES AT EASTBOURNE, 1901



*homie* and enterprise of the Newcastle committee.

But, sad to relate, English tournaments are frequently ruined by bad weather, and if one day in the week is blank it means a rush and a hustle to get the finals off on Saturday. Few players are able, under these circumstances, to do themselves justice, and the matches are frequently fought out by tired men. Often the last matches are divided or played in semi-darkness. On the Continent, Sunday, as I have said, is always available ; they do not have to rush matters.

Some four years ago there could have been no question as to which were the best and most enjoyable tournaments in the world—they were those on the Riviera. Their charm was accentuated by the fact that they were held at a time of year when it was wholly desirable to be out of England. The majority of players were then English and all the matches, though fought keenly and invariably producing excellent tennis, had no suspicion of the life-and-death feeling

now associated with the Riviera. Be that as it may, the Riviera tournaments still offer great attractions. From a purely tennis point of view there is probably more play worth watching and analysing than anywhere else in the world—of course I except Wimbledon and the American championships. And what is all essential, the courts along the Littoral are of the best and truest.

The Monte Carlo meeting is run on a lavish scale. There is free admission to the ground, and the whole business, like the motor boat races and pigeon shooting, is an auxiliary to the Casino. I suppose the authorities can hardly expect their patrons to gamble their money away all day long, and so, at great expense, they provide other little amusements such as the tennis. San Remo on the Italian Riviera has a delightful little meeting, and is a suitable preparation for the more strenuous tournaments ahead. Menton usually follows Monte Carlo. In my opinion Menton has one of the most attractive clubs in the south of France.

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M. de Bourbel, its president, has fathered the club for years, and may well be proud of his child.

I have a personal liking for the Nice courts. Last year I managed to win the Nice Cup outright without losing a set in the three years.

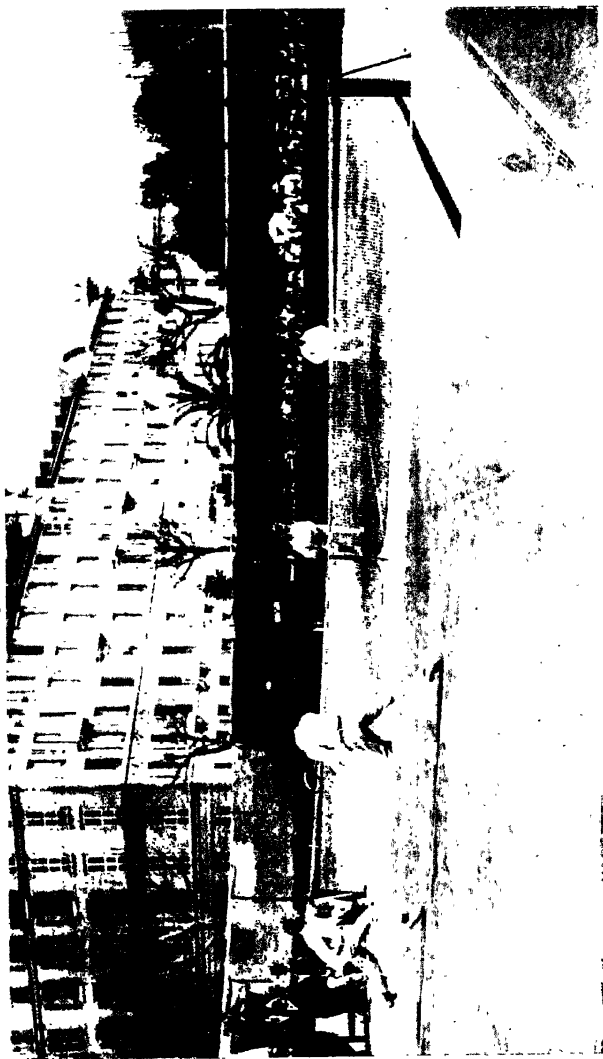
On the way up from the Riviera a delightful covered court tournament is usually held at Lyons, where the standard of play has been gradually improving. The club receives visits from Paris teams, a fact which naturally sets the Lyonnais men a high standard at which to aim. They consider themselves as good as Paris at football, and rightly hope and expect some day to equal the Parisians at tennis.

Paris is now one of the most important lawn tennis centres in the world. A Paris team would probably more than hold its own against a representative London team. For the advance of France in the last three years has been remarkable. The high standard set by their champion, Max Decugis, has, of course, been the making of French lawn

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tennis. At the present time there are more promising young players on the Continent than in England and the Colonies put together. Gobert and Laurentz, for instance, can both be counted in the very first class. I am speaking of a first class in its most select sense, in its application to the entire tennis world. It is one thing to be first class at your local club and quite another to be first class from an international standpoint.

Both Gobert and Laurentz have great natural abilities ; added to which they have every possible opportunity for perfecting their game—ample time, perfect covered courts for winter play and the best practice in the world. But, of course, these two young players could never have reached such an extraordinary state of proficiency without natural gifts far above the ordinary. Gobert takes his game very seriously and works everything out in a most methodical manner. He is rather prone to get a little excited over his matches, but this trait in his character is disappearing, and the match-winning qualities of his game are proportion-



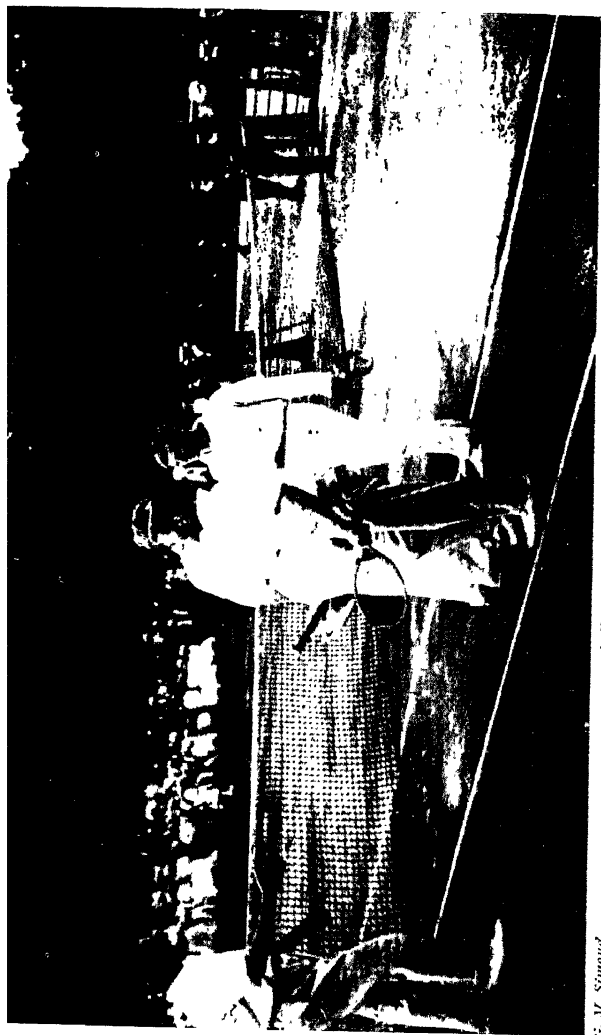
*M. Dugues*

*J. F. W.*

*M. F. G. Riche*

*H. J. Doherty*

FINAL OF SOUTH OF FRANCE CHAMPIONSHIP DOUBLES AT NICE, 1907



G. M. Simond

A. F. H. O. Kruiser O. Frouchtin  
AFTER WINNING THE OPEN DOUBLES AT WIESBADEN, 1968

ately increasing. About six feet three inches in height, he makes every use of his tremendous reach. In serving he throws the ball up very high and thus takes full advantage of every inch. He has steadied down in his ground strokes during the last year or two, and having an excellent style, a versatile mind and unbounded enthusiasm is certain to go much further.

Laurentz is even younger and his strokes are less orthodox and more brilliant. He already stands among the best players of the day and will probably carry off the Championship within a few years.

On an outside court I consider Decugis, at the time of writing, to be the finest player on the Continent. Germany may put in Froitzheim's claim, but results do not warrant it. Decugis has repeatedly, both in private matches and in tournaments, proved his superiority. Though he may not possess the sweetest of temperaments on court, Decugis has a stability and variety of stroke, a consistency of service, and a knowledge of tactics which place him above

his countrymen at the present time. He has been first class from youth upwards. He went to school in England and graduated at Queen's. Equally good on both forehand and backhand, he has a deadly smash and a terrific service, though fortunately the last is apt on occasion to misfire. His most vulnerable point is his low volleying. On his own sand courts I place him first.

Germot, known to his friends as "Fifi," has a delightful style, and, against an average player, is good. But hard hitting combined with that degree of accuracy which now characterizes the best of the younger school of France rather overwhelms "Fifi's" beautifully stylish game.

France—in fact, the whole Continent—uses nothing but covered courts, or courts of the sand variety. In England we are almost entirely dependent on grass. Everyone is agreed that a good grass court provides the perfect game, but anything falling short of a good grass court is an abomination. Then there is the drawback that rain and a little play transform what was a good court into



a quagmire. The superiority in courts has given the Continental men more tennis under conditions superior to those in England, and this fact is mainly the secret of their remarkable progress. Grass, sand and covered courts may vary, and it is quite conceivable that conflicting results would come from a series of matches arranged between two Continental players on different varieties of surface. But as a general rule hard court conditions are common throughout Europe, and Continental players are so much the better off.

But while the hard courts across the Channel with their true surface and uniform bound have common properties which make them ideal nurseries for advancing talent, there are some courts abroad on which the visitor, new to high altitudes, is, for the first few days, in dire distress. I shall never forget my first experience of the Johannesburg courts. I had travelled up from Durban to the Rand, across those silent planes of unfenced emptiness known as the South African veldt, and found myself, still

with my sea legs and coast inertia, in an electric atmosphere six thousand feet above the level of the sea. When I first started to play on the immaculate soil of which Johannesburg courts are made, I thought no Derby favourite could have been better trained—so buoyant was the ozone. But after I had followed up my service to the net for one game I was like a broken pair of bellows. In fact, I was quite distressed. Since I was a day late for the South African championship, and had to get to work at once, this “queer feeling” might have proved disastrous. Fortunately I had rather an easy draw and by the time a tough nut had to be cracked I was nearly acclimatized. Yet without doubt Johannesburg is the most difficult place in the world for a player to strike form who is not accustomed to its peculiar conditions. The ball bounces to an abnormal height; the light is quite the brightest I have ever played in; and the surface moves with you. It is impossible to get a good foothold and the best way to transport oneself is to slide

—a device adopted by the local players. That was the only fault with the Johannesburg courts and I would not refer to it were it not essential to stand firm when executing shots depending for their efficiency on accurate placing. Of the South African championship, as of its players, I have nothing but the pleasantest recollections. The local players and executive, headed by Messrs H. J. Lamb, Rintoul and Davis, could not have been more considerate or more hospitable. The tournament, which I was lucky enough to win, was, I believe, the largest ever held in South Africa. Indeed, the entry was so overwhelming that many matches had to be played on other club courts. In spite of this drawback the management of the meeting throughout was marvellously efficient. Johannesburg, to my mind, has one of the most genuinely sporting communities in the world. And the wonderful thing is that sport is never allowed to interfere with business.

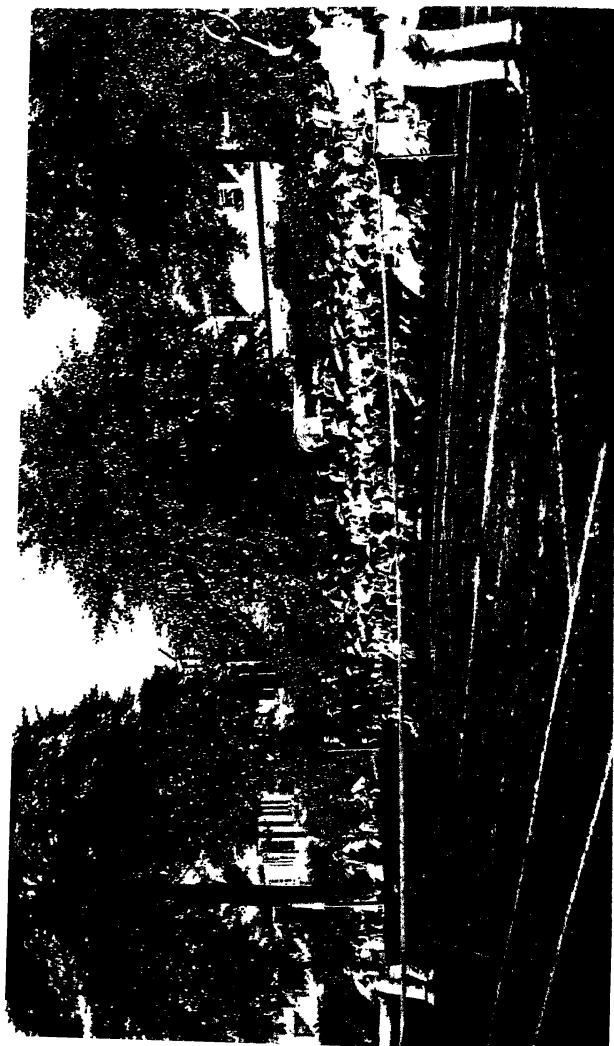
In the next chapter will be found some reference to Sapicourt, where many private

tournaments have taken place and which most of the first-class players of the day have visited. The results arrived at here have generally been more reliable than those at open tournaments. Talking of the wine district reminds me that I once journeyed all the way to Bordeaux to play. The keenness displayed was only equalled by the hospitality extended to English visitors. *Vive l'entente cordiale!* I have vivid recollections of exploring miles and miles of wine cellars, which appeared to extend to extraordinary distances in every direction. Also we had a splendid day's racing, our friends generally anticipating what horse was going to win. Nor was that all. The Primrose Club contained a ball-room and when it was too dark for tennis everyone repaired to its delightful floor.

Nevertheless the best matches of a private nature I have ever played have been in England—at Thorpe Satchville, the delightful home in Leicestershire of Mr and Mrs George Hillyard. Many a strenuous, evenly balanced contest has been waged here.



MR. AND MRS. G. W. HILLYARD AT THORPE SATCHVILLE



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Perfect conditions, all of us in the mood to play, the match pre-arranged—every attribute tended to bring out the best tennis.

The private tournament given by the Grand Duke Michael at Kenwood has now become an annual and a most popular affair. Though the standard of play is not universally high, the enthusiasm and keenness might well be emulated by many *blasé* tournament players. Heirons, of Queen's, in conjunction with Mr Eddie Stonor, arrange all the handicaps with great skill. Those least pleased with their handicaps usually survive at the finish. King Manoel, the Duchess of Sutherland, and many others reveal unsuspected powers. In 1910 Mrs Arthur Crosfield and the Grand Duke Michael were just defeated in the final by the Hon. Edward Stonor and Countess Torby after a most exciting match. I can vouch for the former's efficient combination from personal experience. Mrs Crosfield has a fine drive from the back line—a stroke that just fits in with the Grand Duke's game—essentially a volleying one. Standing close to the

net he is very quick to take advantage of any opening. In 1911 a dark horse from America in Mr Harrison, who was well backed up by Lady Mary Ward, managed to secure this most coveted prize, defeating Mr W. Holbech and Mrs Hall Walker in the final. Mr Clem Cazalet, the old Cambridge player of whom much was expected, found the standard rather too high for him and was unplaced ! The Grand Duke, I might add, has a delightful golf course at Kenwood.

The world may not know it, but Mr Arthur Balfour plays a good game of tennis. I have been privileged to play with him on several occasions, and he can hold up his end in a good men's four. I shall not soon forget my first game with him. Mr Balfour had not been initiated into the mysteries of the American service ; and when I varied the deliveries, first giving him an on break and then an off one—both services have a tendency to break in a contrary direction to that of their swerve—Mr Balfour was perplexed and would stop and meditate for minutes at a time. He

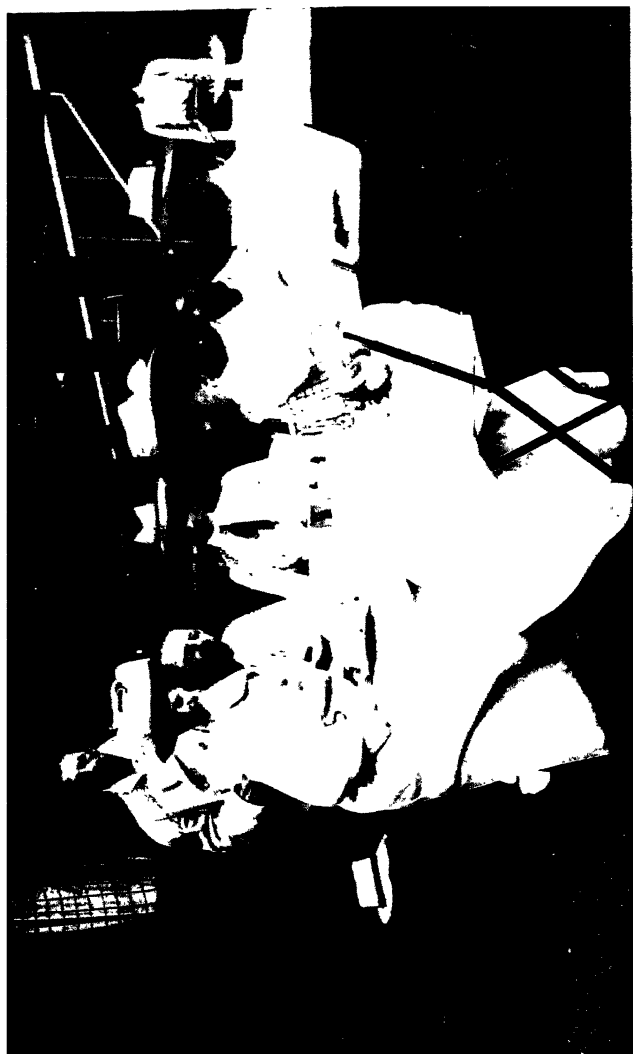


said the break at lawn tennis was different to every other kind of spin he had experienced in ball games. But these thoughtful pauses bore fruit, and we had not been playing long before he knew as much about what the service was going to do as I did. Mr Balfour's aeroplane trip, which I witnessed, struck me as one of the most sporting events of our Coronation year.

Another magnificent all-round sportsman who can play a good game is Lord Desborough. He has very good courts at Taplow, and in addition has a covered court wherein is played a game which can best be described as half lawn tennis and half tennis. Naturally I could more than slightly hold my own on the lawn tennis courts of Taplow, but I always knew a good thrashing was in store for me inside at the hands of Lord Desborough and his son, Billy Grenfell. The counting is similar to lawn tennis, but the court has walls and a high net. Lord Desborough, I need not add, is the President of the Lawn Tennis Association.

In the course of a business trip to Scan-

dinavia last winter I was invited to play a few games with King Gustav at the Royal Club, Stockholm. It is not the Royal Club in the sense that it is kept exclusively for his Majesty's use. Indeed its founder, who is nothing if not democratic, built it for the use of players of Stockholm generally, with whom, when he was Crown Prince, he would often compete in open tournaments. These covered courts are supplied with artificial light and can thus be used at all hours of the day. As a player King Gustav has skill as well as enthusiasm, and I was reluctantly forced to write to my father to tell him that at last, reckoning on the principle of "weight for age," I had found a man his equal. The King has a hard and accurate forehand drive, the direction of which is cleverly concealed until the last moment. Well over six feet, he uses every inch of his height in serving. Moreover, he has a shrewd conception of the angles of the court and is not disconcerted by a volleying attack. A man to whom physical fitness means mental fitness, he plays regularly and always with





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great zest. When on court the King, so to speak, exchanges the sceptre for the racket ; there is no chamberlain waiting to pick up balls. Neither is his tennis selfish or personal. In our practice games together he always invited some of the younger and promising players to complete our four, his idea being that they would probably benefit by the experience. Then his knowledge of the game and its organization is profound. He is well informed as to the relative form and records of the principal players throughout the world.

Both Sweden and Norway have a peculiar charm for the out-door man. The Scandinavian has no need to go in search of winter sports, the facilities lie ready at his door. Taking a short tram ride out from Christiania on Sunday afternoon, I was amazed at the scene presented. The entire population seemed to be ski-ing, tobogganing, or skating. The Norseman's skill and daring in all branches of winter pastimes is well known, but the extraordinary leaps performed by the ski-runners have to be seen

to be believed. Indeed, I would almost wager that some of them would jump off the dome of St Paul's if the conditions in Ludgate Hill were favourable. The exhilarating climate seems to get into the Scandinavian's blood, for you will find him as full of life at the café (where good music is often blended with bad whisky) as on the snow or ice. My business' errand carried me to the coldest north, and I shall never forget sledging for seven hours in twenty degrees of frost. Yet the intense cold, unaccompanied by any wind or moisture, is quite pleasant. Up there, roughly speaking, it is dark all day and night in the winter and light for a similar period in the summer.

Many important tournaments are held in Austria, and it has more than once been my privilege to enjoy the round of Marienbad, Franzensbad and Carlsbad. These meetings are held in fashionable August, but competitors are not compelled to take the "cure"! I recall a very amusing race I once witnessed at Marienbad. It was restricted to men over eighteen stone, who

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were handicapped according to their weight. The course was divided into controls, an arrangement which gave the competitors a breathing space at intervals. A feather-weight of twenty-one stone was returned winner, and won a substantial money prize of over fifty pounds.

Vienna has its tournament in the spring, and is altogether a delightful meeting. But in the old days the programme moved languidly. Competitors turned up and played their matches only when the spirit moved them ; the beginning of a floral fête in the neighbouring prater was the signal for all flower-throwers to lay down their rackets. There was an air of irresponsible gaiety over the whole meeting, and I am ashamed to say that I saw the sun rise on more than one occasion whilst still in evening attire. In consequence, the final caused me much anxiety and I only won by the skin of my teeth against that excellent sportsman, Curt von Wessely.

My doubles partner on this particular trip was Baron Boris de Struve, one of the

best travelling companions in the world. We left Wiesbaden together for Prague about four in the morning, having been up all night at a ball given by Frau von Meister to the German Emperor and his suite—a magnificent spectacle which quite removed any idea I may have entertained that German ladies cannot dress as beautifully as any in Europe. Nor have I ever seen finer-looking men than the Emperor's suite.

De Struve was an Americanized Russian, his father having been Russian Ambassador to America. On boarding a train his first question to the guard was always the same, "Haben sie ein speise wagon?" Both lunch and dinner were incomplete affairs to him unless they were accompanied by a bottle of Mumm "Cordon Rouge."

The Praguers are very keen and play well. But the racial feeling between Czechs and Austrian Germans runs very high, and it was amusing to watch a match between an Englishman and an Austrian German. The Czechs mustered in force, and, to use an Australian expression, "barracked" for



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all they were worth whenever the Englishman chanced to hit the ball over. I once took my father to Prague and we played together in the doubles. He was amazed at the high standard of play produced by these young Bohemians and even more surprised when two young Czechs put us out of the event.

Prague, of course, is one of the most interesting old cities in Europe. Marked out as the natural capital of Bohemia, the picturesque effect of its masses of buildings and innumerable spires and towers, filling the valley of the Moldau and climbing the hills on either side, is increased by their stirring historical background.

De Struve and I were met at Vienna, I recall, by a band of sportsmen. Although it was near midnight we were only permitted to deposit our baggage before our kind hosts escorted us to an entertainment from which we were not allowed to depart until six in the morning. Not that we cherished any strong desire to leave earlier. The music at Vienna, to say nothing of the

dancing, is enchanting, and I was well content to look on while De Struve, a veritable Mordkin, took a leading part in the programme. Perhaps these late hours had something to do with the fact that De Struve and I got no further than the final of the doubles.

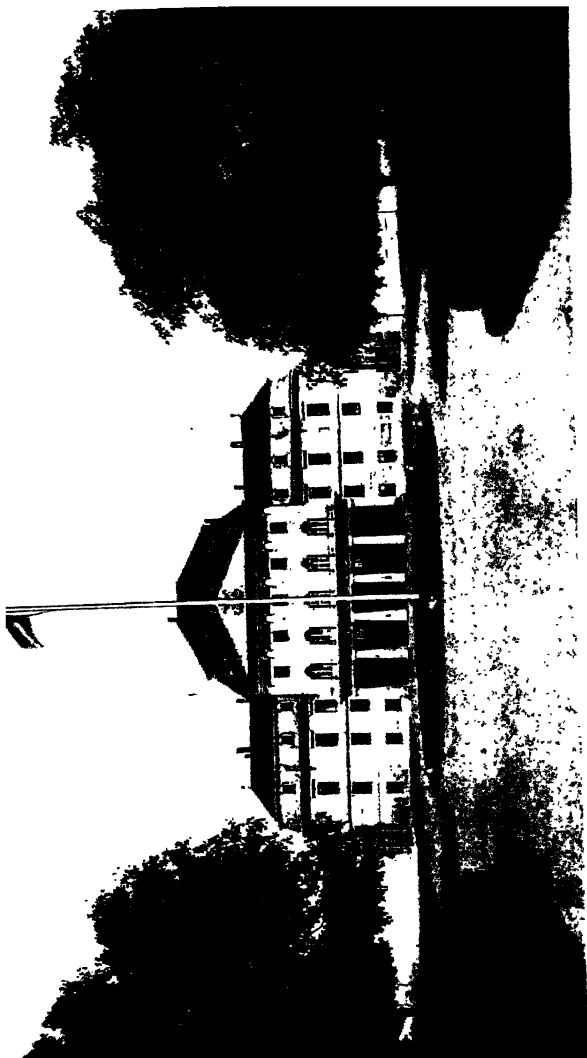
Our next port of call was Budapest, for which I have a particular affection, having spent about a year of my life in Hungary. The Margit Club is situate on an island in the Danube and is most picturesque. During the final the Archduke, the Archduchess, and a regular retinue of children and A.D.C.'s made a most magnificent entry, walking right across the court in the middle of a game. The hospitality of these Continental clubs has to be tested to be understood. I am not sure that the banquet on the day of finals does not rank higher in importance than the actual matches.

It has been my privilege, as the guest of Baron Lipthay, to be present at a number of shooting parties in Southern Hungary, and since the methods differ materially from

those in England, I may perhaps be allowed to give a few details. The day usually starts with a meal which might be described as the blend of an ordinary English breakfast with a sumptuous afternoon tea. Sportsmen and sportswomen come down in a state of extreme excitement—for everyone is excited during the shoot of the year—and servants rush about with fresh pancakes, omelettes, muffins and tea-cakes. When everyone is satisfied the party clamber up into the various carriages waiting outside. Walking is exceedingly unpopular and the sportsmen are conveyed to their stands. Tracks are heavy and four horses to each carriage are required. The party are met by their loaders and seat-bearers. If any member is a very good shot, or blessed with extraordinary luck, a Hungarian lady will get out and sit with him, giving advice. I remember once allowing an old fox to run away untouched, and shall never forget the scolding I got from my partner ; for a fox is *the* thing to shoot. The Hungarian women who shoot are invariably good. One of the

Archduchesses, exceptionally keen, appeared in delightfully sensible kit which included Tyrolean stockings, a skirt somewhat resembling a kilt, and a much befeathered hat. In spite of having a crack shot on either side she can hold her own with them all.

Hungary is justly famous for its partidges, and a thousand brace in one day to eight guns is not an exceptional bag. After each beat the carriages pick up the guns. A custom not in vogue in England is that after every drive the host asks each gun how many he has shot. Lunch is taken hurriedly out of doors ; shooting and not feeding is essentially the matter in hand. We return for afternoon tea, and then the men of the party retire to their rooms and shed their muddy boots and thick stockings to appear in slippers and silk stockings—the latter have been worn under the thick ones. The rest of the evening is English. On the last night a famous tzigane band will probably come down from Budapest and everyone sits wrapped up listening to what many



KORMEND : PRINCE BATHIVÁNY-STRAITMANN'S HOME IN HUNGARY



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musical people of other nations consider a succession of weird discords. But I like it, and the Hungarians love it, and there were occasions when we all sat up until eight o'clock the following morning. There is also a little dancing.

The Hungarian beaters are very picturesque, and many of them are gipsies. The women (generally clad in very ancient red knickers) also come out, earn their tenpence a day and find their own food, on the same footing as the men.

On a fairly big day some six hundred beaters toe the line. It follows that some of the lower class in the less frequented districts become poachers, and, in point of fact, on one estate no less than three head-gamekeepers were murdered.

The good Hungarian loves horses like none other. Every fair-sized estate has its stud farm and usually a thoroughbred English sire. One of the best horses in the world is a cross between an English sire and Hungarian mare.

As hosts the Hungarians are the most

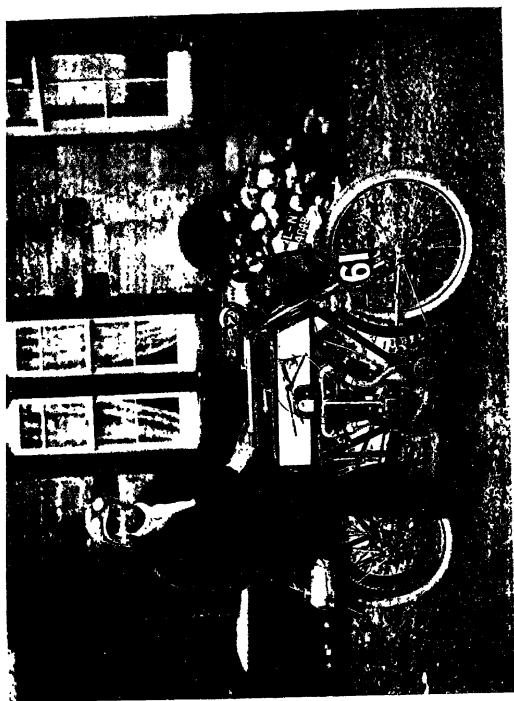
hospitable and charming people in the world, and I look back on twelve supremely happy months spent in various parts of their country.

Elsewhere I give some further Continental impressions. Every tournament I have visited abroad had some distinctive feature, and every town had some phase of sport or life or some historical or scenic attraction that was worth inspecting. Thus Baden Baden has its fashionable races and the incomparable Black Forest; Barcelona its bull-fights, its pelota and its cosmopolitan Rambla; Ostend its holiday-makers of one class in full cry, and Homburg its holiday-makers of another class in retreat.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### ON THE ROAD AND IN THE AIR

FROM casual references strewn about this volume the reader will have gathered that I number motor cycling among my hobbies. At one time, when I was a freer agent than I am now, motor cycling was more than a hobby to me : it was my method of locomotion, my substitute for (and how much superior to !) the railway train. Mr Punch may liken the motor cyclist to a man who sits in a perpetual draught ; but give me the iciest current of fresh air in preference to the stuffy, rebreathed atmosphere of a railway carriage. The one invigorates and rejuvenates, the other—well, the other is apt to prove a *casus belli* with the amiable old gentleman who revels in the soporific properties of hot air. Gott ! How many evil gleams from German eyes did I not en-

counter before, lowering windows for the last time, I dispensed with trains altogether, and took to the road. Of course, there are times when the motor cyclist's philosophy is strained—when, for example, at dead of night, in a strange land and on a broken, dishevelled road he may find himself admiring the moon, a burst tyre and complete solitude at the same time; when an irrational customs officer threatens to cast him into gaol unless a fabulous sum quite beyond the capacity of the tourist is paid instantly; or when the nearest town is a hundred kilometres away and you have been thrown gently into a ditch—but I defy any man who has brought with him a stout heart and a khaki waterproof to say that the game is not worth the petrol. Believe me, there is only one joy better than flying along a clean, sound French road at forty miles an hour, and that is the joy of flying at sixty miles an hour. For Continental transit, as a medium for getting from one tournament to another, and that often a thousand miles away, I have found the motor cycle invaluable.

My friends persist in thinking its use has affected my play ; on the contrary, I believe it has improved it. At any rate, it has kept me moving in the open and it has brought me experiences and introduced me to phases of life abroad that I wouldn't have missed for all the championships in the world.

Some four years ago I allowed myself to be persuaded by my friend, Mr Archie Craig, to accompany him on the Land's End to John o' Groat's reliability trial. Sixty odd motor cycles toed the line at Land's End. We had to average out about 180 miles a day, and were given a certain small margin of time at each control (there were about four a day) in which to arrive. That is to say, we lost marks at the rate of one a minute if we touched one of these controls before or after the scheduled hour. I have a vivid recollection of the weather through the Highlands of Scotland ; it was most appalling. On arrival at night, I always found it necessary to play the garage hose over both

myself and the machine. Some of the cycles broke in half, others developed minor ills ; but in the end thirty-seven arrived. One of the riders was a lady—Miss Muriel Hind—who rode magnificently and displayed remarkable pluck. Her machine did not treat her well, and to have brought it through as she did was a feat any male might envy.

My old bike behaved quite amiably and I hadn't a single stop of any kind over the whole of a very severe trial. As a result the authorities actually gave me a gold medal and special prize. Five miles after completing the course I broke an inlet valve, but after fitting a new one continued my journey back to London via Edinburgh. I rode all through the last night in order to catch the morning boat to Dieppe for a tennis tournament, for which, needless to say, I was late. Though I had covered some 2000 miles in about ten days my tennis was slightly better than before I set out on this wild-goose chase.

I have had so many dozens of motor

cycle tours in all parts of Europe that you would be bored to death if I began to describe them. But I will risk including in this chapter some account of my trip from London to Evian-les-Bains. First, however, a word about relative roads. England for surface heads the list. France is excellent for long open stretches suitable for speed. German roads somewhat resemble the French, but in Southern Germany every village is vilely cobble-stoned. The Bavarian roads I have found good. Except a few of the really main roads, such as Prague to Vienna and Mulhausen to Vienna, Austrian roads are very bad. In Hungary metal has in most cases to be brought from great distances, so that only the main roads are metalled at all. Some of these are serviceable, and if care is taken in selecting the route Hungary makes a new and very interesting touring ground. Servia is extraordinary—a few miles of really nice going and suddenly you find yourself in the bottom of a hole in the middle of the road, or in a river bed. In both Hungary and

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Servia I have resorted to riding along the railway track, bumping over never-ending sleepers. The main roads of Northern Italy I know pretty well and I disagree with most authorities when I declare them good.

And now for a truthful account of my journey from London to Evian-les-Bains and back, some 3000 miles in all. My mount was a 7-8 Bat-Jap with Phelon & Moore two-speed gear. Leaving London at five-thirty one fine Saturday afternoon, I had a good run down to Dover. The English landscape is certainly more picturesque than the Continental. The old English villages, hopfields, ancient churches and beautiful parks are all peculiar to England and England alone. The roads, from a purely motoring point of view, are of course dangerous, and make fast going a risk not only to oneself but to others. On this very journey, some thirty miles from Dover, I found a great collection of villagers swinging lanterns, and excitement prevailing generally. Pulling up, I discovered that a car had run into a hay cart at one of the



many dangerous cross-roads ; a high fence had made both vehicles invisible until the last moment, when of course it was too late.

I spent the night at the Lord Warden. The garage fee of three shillings for storing a humble motor cycle struck me as being exorbitant. I remonstrated mildly with the lady presiding at the office, but " Them's our charges " appeared to her to be an unassailable argument. Trouble faced me in the morning when I was informed that the Channel boat wouldn't carry motor cycles. It was Whit Sunday and everything seemed overcrowded. However, I had a satisfactory conversation with a charming chief officer whose beard closely resembled that of Captain Kettle. A somewhat extensive experience of ship life has taught me to make friends with the chief officer whenever a favour is to be asked.

At Ostend I found the customs officers quite delightful, and with a mixture of bad French on my side and worse English on theirs, the machine was soon through. I was, of course, four pounds the poorer,

but this money comes back. A rather amusing incident occurred just as customs officialism was nearing completion. Knowing the usual delay and trouble incurred in obtaining petrol at the other end of a sea journey, I usually take the precaution of filling a beer bottle with petrol and hiding it in my coat. The law says petrol may not be carried in the machine, but a little in a bottle, provided it is well hidden, doesn't seem to matter. However, just at the crucial moment, an over-zealous Flemish porter, in his endeavours to be brisk and pleasant, wished my coat off its resting place, and lo ! the bottle burst at the feet of his Majesty's officers. The customs officers showed themselves good sportsmen and turned their eyes and noses in another direction.

Ostend is always an amusing place, but its gaiety is overdone and palls on one very soon. But the bathing is excellent, and it is possible to swim, though few of the ladies appear to bathe for this purpose. After a week in Ostend, including some good bathing, mild

lawn tennis, and too many late hours, I was glad to move on. I chose a somewhat peculiar hour to leave. I had an engagement to dine, and when I had got the machine all in order, filled with petrol, lamp charged, my clothes changed, etc., it was one in the morning.

My first aim was Bruges. It was very dark and I got to a village some twenty kilometres away where four roads, awaiting my fancy, converged. After many fruitless attempts to wake up someone, I moved off on the most likely-looking road. Seeing a light in a tiny hotel window, I simultaneously free-engined the machine and tooted the horn. This manœuvre was attended with immediate success. An aged dame poked out her head garbed in a weird sort of candlestick nightcap. "À Bruges?" I inquired. She nodded her nightcap and I shot forward. I got to Bruges about three A.M. and feeling a little tired, having been playing tennis finals all the afternoon, I decided to sleep. But I could not get a room in Bruges in spite of having the able

assistance of two policemen. Six hotels were roused up, and all were full. It was beginning to get light, so I set off on another sixty kilometres to Ghent. The road was straight, the side path moderately good, and by four-thirty A.M. I was in Ghent. I went to bed and slept until *déjeuner*.

The roads "proper" in this neighbourhood are composed of the vilest cobble stones imaginable. Whenever practicable I took the side path constructed for "push-bikes" and "verboden" for motor cycles. A policeman often stood in front and ordered me off. I complied with the utmost good grace: it only meant fifty yards before turning on again. Belgium is blessed with some of the worst roads in Europe, and from Ghent to Antwerp I had some good healthy bumping, especially on the outskirts of Antwerp. I ferried across the river with a fellow motor cyclist who was riding a  $4\frac{1}{2}$  twin Minerva; he appeared to live in the neighbourhood, but hadn't the remotest idea of the roads in any direction. Antwerp is all *pavé*, and after a little difficulty I was

delighted to find myself on the road to Cappellen.

On the Dutch frontier, at a village called Puten, I made good friends with the customs officer, and to my satisfaction he imposed duty on my machine at a twenty-eight pound basis. After transacting business with some despatch we repaired to the local hotel, where, to his great delight, I filled him up with beer—a beverage for which he appeared to have a singular capacity and apparently no great dislike. After our little debauch I found the front tyre flat, with a nail through it. Since it was Sunday all the youths of the village were lounging about in their smartest robes and widest trousers—a custom which seems common to all countries. The tyre had gone down suddenly, and the phenomenon aroused general interest. Many willing hands assisted in the changing tube process; I hadn't even to pump up the tyre myself. Some thirty kilometres farther on, a report, which made a woman and child jump high in the air, and frightened me considerably, led me to

understand the back tyre had burst ; but the usual sickly bump one feels was absent. I laughed at the woman and went on. A hundred yards farther on there was another report, and this time there was a bump with a vengeance. The first report was the outer cover, the second was the tube : I had never before known them go off separately. I had only twenty minutes of light, but got to work and finished by aid of the lamp held by a multitude of curious Dutch school children, who in this case were most useful. Eventually I started, going off in the wrong direction the extent of some ten kilometres, then ferried over a river and arrived at an island village called Thoelen. I got up early next morning, and, aided by the local " push bike " expert, changed the back and front tyres. I feared the repaired back cover would not stand on the back wheel, but it travelled for six hundred kilometres on the front, and then was only changed as a precaution.

The route now lay through Steinbergen to Willemstadt, and over a large expanse of

water (per boat) to Mumesdorf and then to Rotterdam ; from here direct to The Hague and Scheveningen, my destination, where I arrived just after lunch. The tennis tournament began the next day and I spent a short part of each morning taking down the carburettor or making various little adjustments. The footboard had been broken owing to my bumping over *pavé*. Scheveningen I voted an overrated place. I stayed out in the country with my good friend, Herr Broese van Groenou, and had a very delightful week without its attractions.

One afternoon we motored out to see the late Herr von Maasdyke fly. We were introduced to him and looked all over his biplane machine—a Farman with a revolving gnome engine. He said he had no room to take me up, but probably wouldn't have done so in any case.

Before leaving The Hague for Evian-les-Bains, a whole afternoon was spent over the usual tinkering. Every man to his own taste in these matters, but personally, among other things, I generally : (1) Crawl

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all round the machine with a screw wrench, screw driver, and that most useful implement of torture, a "quick grip." (2) Tighten, or attempt to tighten, every bolt and nut visible and invisible. We learn in the nursery "A stitch in time saves nine," and heaven knows a turn of the screw wrench time and again saves a nut, and possibly more. (3) See all my tools are present, in order, and easy of access. One is generally in a hurry on the road. (4) Ascertain that my spare tubes have not got chafed and sprung leaks. It is somewhat annoying to put in a defective tube and pump hard without any result. (5) See that the crank case is clean and the engine as far as possible in good order.

After doing all this, and in addition changing my back cover for a new steel-studded non-skid "Le Persan," I felt my duty done. I naturally gave the machine a run and was satisfied. At seven-fifteen next morning my kind host Van Groenou saw me off. All went well for three miles, when down went the back tyre. I must admit



that I dismounted with some trepidation. When a new cover punctures after three kilometres it generally points to a wrong fit, which means endless nips and trouble. However, I soon discovered a big fat nail, pulled it out, had a new tube in and was away again. I find studded covers more prone to pick up nails.

The roads throughout Holland are all *pavé*, but the surface is distinctly good, although I prefer the Macadam surface of England, France and Germany ; but Holland need not be ashamed of her main roads, like Belgium. I often pushed the old machine up to forty miles per hour, but didn't like doing more here. Shortly before reaching Arnheim the Persian steel studs and a raised tram line had a difference of opinion, with the result that the machine twisted round, faced London again and tumbled over. The gear wheel was bent, and as it was the low gear I pulled off the chain and rode into Arnheim on the high gear. Here a local expert straightened and trued it up while I lunched. At Arnheim I also had a

small leak in the petrol tank repaired. Here one said good-bye to the *pavé*. Some forty kilometres brought me to Elten, the German frontier. After profusely greeting a fat swaggering gentleman in green with handshakes, we settled down to business, and to my surprise he allowed the Royal Automobile Club card to hold sway. We made great friends, and he insisted upon helping me, in a manner more sporting than effective, to wire on a gigantic new number. Meanwhile a huge touring car full of Americans was impatiently waiting; but my friend would not leave me and his game with the wire for fifty Americans and fifty motor cars.

At Emmerich, a little farther on, the Rhine was met and my route henceforward lay more or less directly along it for hundreds and hundreds of kilometres. The roads are excellent, but I rather fancy I got off the track a little before Dusseldorf, as the roads were shocking and I did not recollect their depravity when I previously travelled this same route. At Dusseldorf I

got in the middle of the town and experienced some difficulty in securing oil and petrol and getting out again. We, the machine and I, certainly were a little travel-stained, but I hardly think we warranted the extraordinary amount of interest and staring indulged in by the burghers of Dusseldorf. Two years ago I remember arriving at Dusseldorf in pouring rain and taking two consecutive side-slip tosses in the main street. The surface was asphalt, my tyres were very smooth and the engine fierce : the old type of twin cylinder that went twenty-five miles an hour or not at all.

After much bumping on *pavé* and cursing German stupidity I eventually got on the road to Cologne, and a good deal of the way I pushed along at fifty miles per hour. At Cologne I was compelled to sit and watch endless craft, tugs, tourist steamers, barges and what not pass through the bridge, which had been temporarily rent asunder. By the way, in Germany and in Rhineland particularly, whenever you cross a bridge you have to give five centimes (a half-

penny) for a ticket, which is nipped and then handed back to you. The bridge is then traversed and the ticket collected at the other end, where it is nipped again and eventually returned to you for future reference. Was it not Kipling who so delighted in buying tickets at German railway stations merely to watch the pleasure it gave guards and other officials to nip them? To come back to the bridge-keepers, these worthy custodians are generally decked out like field marshals. The Englishman in Germany who can tell a general from a hotel porter is indeed worthy of being called a genius and will surely be thought a spy. In the old days I made a point of rushing all the bridges I could, and loved the "Gotts!" and "Himmels!" that followed; but now with two gears and a free engine I usually stop and pay up like a gentleman—and pull their legs when possible.

At Cologne a full moon was just rising over the cathedral, and the night was altogether so beautiful that I decided to

ride on to Bonn, the university town situated on the Rhine. I arrived there about nine P.M., having ridden from The Hague, Holland, to Bonn, Germany, in the day, a distance of 314 kilometres or about 190 miles. After supper I turned in and slept well. The following morning about an hour was put in at the same old business—cleaning out crank case, tightening nuts, etc. At ten-fifteen I started on up the Rhine towards Coblenz. The roads hereabouts are as good as any in the world, and I rejoiced in having the power and gearing (7 H.P. and a top gear of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 1) to make use of them. All along the Rhine the scenery is very fine, but too much built upon and civilized to compare with the incomparable Wanganui River of New Zealand. For the most part the roads through Coblenz, Mainz, Darmstadt and Heidelberg were beautiful, but *pavé* of the very worst kind in the villages. It was not very late when I arrived at Heidelberg. I decided to use my old friend the moon and go on. I dined at Durlach and reached

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Strassburg about ten P.M. Day's run : Bonn to Strassburg, distance of 376 kilometres or 225 miles. I stayed some time in Strassburg and left after midday as I had time to put in somewhere. I made an excellent run from Strassburg to Basel, the Swiss frontier, doing the 134 kilometres in just over two hours. The road is straight, clear and free from traffic.

As in most previous journeys, my carrier broke twice on this journey. At times I go fairly fast, so need things strong. At Basel, for example, I had a most unfortunate experience. I discovered a shop full of motor cycles, both in a show window and in the repair shop ; and I thought to myself, " Good oil at last." Except at The Hague, where I scoured the town for oil, I found nothing but the thin stuff they use in cars. Of course the density of the oil doesn't matter so much as its " flash point," which for an air-cooled motor engine in very hot weather should be high—higher than for a water-cooled. Throughout the Continent it is impossible to get special motor cycle

oil. Whenever I do find good oil on tour I stick an extra can on behind; and in future I will never leave England without having a supply of Price's "A" right with me. Well, to come back to Basel. I inquired if they had any very good oil suitable for motor cycles. They assured me they had the best in the world, and showed me a sealed tin with writing proclaiming the many splendid features of the oil for motor cycle engines. I ordered a spare tin and had my tank, which was almost empty, filled up. Meanwhile I went off to lunch, and unfortunately didn't see the oil poured in, otherwise there would have been trouble for my Swiss friend. To make a long story short, all went well for some forty-five kilometres, but at Olten my engine began to knock. I gave her more oil, but she still knocked and got hot, and then to make matters worse the drip feed struck work. I was now in a quite uninhabited part of Switzerland, and it was getting dark. I got off, opened the spare tin, and lo! out came a treacly-looking mess known

as steam engine oil. However, there was nothing for it but to push on to Berne. This I did, getting off alternately to pour treacle in the crank case and clean off the mess it made on the sparking plugs. At length one of the most awful rides I ever had came to an end, and about ten P.M. I clanked into Berne, one of the most beautiful towns, by moonlight at any rate, I have ever seen. The day's run, from Strassburg to Berne, had been about 250 kilometres or 155 miles.

At the garage at Berne all the "shovers" were most interested in the oil, and one especially sympathetic American, who was about to take a maid-and-valet party out in his employer's motor car for a midnight spin, said it was a shame to disguise a wolf in sheep's clothing—referring I suppose to the steam engine oil in a motor cycle oil tin. Next morning I managed to make my already filthy self still more so by cleaning the crank case and entirely removing every trace of the treacle from the tank by suction. The drip feed of course was jammed up with



dirt and steam engine oil. Fresh oil made the engine herself again, and her debauch in no way affected her. Although I only got away from Berne after eleven o'clock I was in Lausanne for lunch. Here a kindly taxi driver who spoke English, or rather strong American fluently, took me under his wing and escorted me in style, taxi and all, to his pension, where I got a very excellent lunch. A garage was next door, and after filling up with petrol he put me on my road for Evian-les-Bains. Evian is just opposite Lausanne, but I preferred to do the sixty odd kilometres round the lake by road. Through Ouchy, Montreux, and so on round the lake is a beautiful ride, and one I would not have missed for anything. I arrived at the Royal Hotel in time for a bath, which was very necessary, and tea. Day's run, Berne to Evian-les-Bains, about 180 kilometres, or 102 miles. Thus the total distance from The Hague to Evian-les-Bains was about 1104 kilometres, or 660 miles. I had taken two days and two half days. My friend, Tid Ralli, who was kindly bringing my

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luggage was not due at Evian until that afternoon, and considering my somewhat unkempt appearance it was not advisable to advertise my arrival. Evian is delightful. A full ten days on the shores of the beautiful Geneva, at the equally delightful Hotel Royal, will ever be a pleasant remembrance. The tennis was good—not of the very serious order, but nevertheless most enjoyable. The Hotel Royal stands high up, commanding a wonderful view of the lake, and is reached either by a winding road or by Funicular. A narrow path runs by the side of this precipitous railway. I casually mentioned one day that it would make a nice little hilly climb for a motor bike. I was laughed at for talking rot, so promptly got the machine out and, to be quite candid, was surprised to find the motor climbed up without difficulty on the low gear.

I left Evian early one drizzly morning and went hard all day, and by ten-thirty p.m. found myself at Melun, only thirty miles from Paris; but as the tank had sprung a

leak, and petrol was running out almost as fast as I could pour it in, I was, much against my will, forced to stop here for the night. The day's run was meritorious—distance 350 miles, or 560 kilometres. I had one puncture, two custom houses to pass, and my route, which was quite unknown to me, to find. Early next morning I got the tank mended, and got to Paris before lunch.

After a week in Paris I went on to Brussels, 400 kilometres, or 225 miles. Except near Paris the roads were excellent.

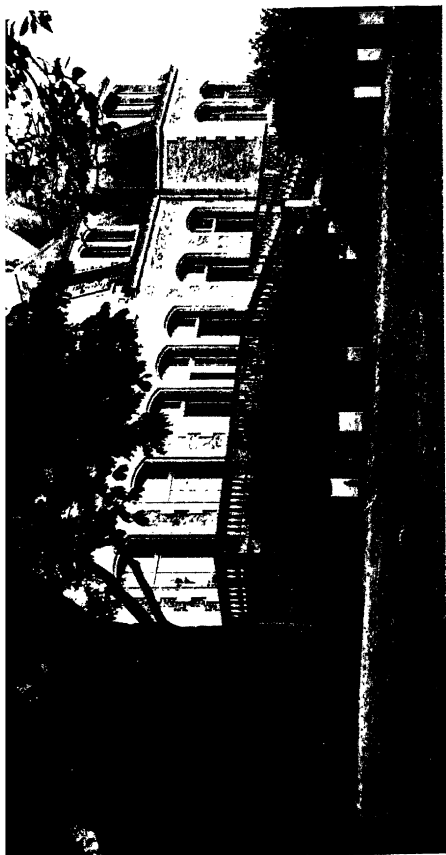
After a week or more in Brussels, where I completely took down my engine, I left for Rheims. The journey was uneventful. I pulled the belt through, and burst an old outer cover. The second stop entailed taking off the back wheel and fitting a new cover which I fortunately had with me. From Rheims to Chateau Sapicourt, my host's place, is only twenty kilometres, but owing to wrong directions and darkness it took over two hours. The lesson to be learnt from this ride was this : if you don't

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want to burst your tyre, or pull through your belts, curb your lust for speed on these lengthy French roads. The roads from Brussels to Rheims leave nothing to be desired.

My kind host, Dr Luling, put one of his 45 Mercedes at our disposal, and accompanied by Muir, of French football fame, I set off for Mourmelon le Grand, one of the best French schools of aviation. We were fortunate enough to meet one of the proprietors of the Antoinette Factory of Aeroplanes, who was personally acquainted with M. Muir. I was introduced, and we were shown the construction rooms and thoroughly inspected Latham's big machine for the Gordon Bennett. It had a 100 H.P. sixteen-cylinder engine—cylinders arranged V-wise, much the same angle as an average twin-cylinder motor cycle. I was informed that if I came over next morning between six and eight A.M. I could fly to my heart's content.

Thus it came about that I was roused about four forty-five A.M. next morning,



CHÂTEAU DE SAIGOURNET, FRANCE



and after a good breakfast was in the Mercedes going at a great rate for Mourmelon—about forty kilometres distant. The scene was a much more animated one at this hour than at eleven A.M. the morning before. Machines were being wheeled about, engines were buzzing round, and some four machines were already aloft. Pupils were learning, and generally the scene was one of work and business. There were also some Farman biplanes going well, with the then matchless Gnome engines.

I was soon up in a machine, seated with the head pilot instructor, a very jovial man. His only words of English were “Goad-bye,” and these he always hurled at me with an accompanying dig in the back when he took a corner at an angle calculated to cause alarm, or made a “Vol Plane.” All went well for a bit, and we flew round the course several times, when my friend said “Goad-bye,” and shot off over a plantation of trees, sending the machine up higher and higher. Suddenly the wretched engine began to miss fire. I know a missfire well

by sight and sound, but at this moment it was more significant to me than ever before. My friend behind said "Goad-bye," and off we went at a great pace towards earth. But just as we looked like making a hole in it the elevating planes seemed to be raised a bit, and we glided up, and then went along beautifully on fairly smooth ground. The sensation was very fine, and I hope to have many more "Vols Planes"; but when the engine stopped dead of its own accord—I really thought my last moment had come.

Our somewhat sudden departure from space to earth was seen at headquarters, and very soon two cars full of interested men and blue-overalled mechanics arrived on the scene to see what was the matter. These clever mechanics soon traced the trouble to a stop in the petrol pipe: this remedied, off we went again. We hadn't got up very far when once more the old engine stopped dead, and flop we came again, this time with a little bump, although M. Pilot said it was very gentle. After putting



in a fresh accumulator we started off again, but alighted, intentionally this time, at the depôt to fill up with water and petrol. Off we went once more, and attained a great height, and were aloft some time.

Thus ended my first fly. The sensation is very fine, and no doubt when thoroughly used to it one feels as secure as on land. When high up the wind seems to shake the frail craft, and its general behaviour is very similar to a light boat on water slightly ruffled by the wind. Here at Rheims a Russian prince, cousin of the Czar, was learning the mysteries of aeronautics from Hanriot Senior. He weighed some fifteen stone and wore the most ferocious clothes and expression. I watched him for a few evenings. After a great deal of talk his engine was started, and somewhat to my surprise the little Hanriot monoplane rose gamely with its noble but weighty cargo to forty yards, and sailed round the aerodrome in splendid form. The prince eventually volplaned down amidst murmured applause from the assembled mechanics and onlookers.

Lindpaintner, the well-known German, was busy trying his new monoplane (Hanriot), with which he hoped to do great things at the Berlin Meeting. Up to then he had only driven biplanes, of which he had no less than three. Lindpaintner is a young student at Heidelberg, a charming man, and the absolute master of four languages, as well as of four aeroplanes.

I inquired the cost of learning to fly at any of the French schools. Two thousand francs (eighty pounds) if you pay your own breakages, and three thousand francs (one hundred and twenty pounds) if you don't. A new machine, Bleriot or Hanriot, costs about twenty-four thousand francs (nine hundred and sixty pounds). The time taken to learn varies considerably according to (1) the pupil's natural aptitude, and (2) the amount of work he puts in. It is possible to learn in two weeks, but quite two months are necessary to make the average man competent. The whole system is reduced to a science. First the pupil is put in a dummy machine with levers

similar to those on a machine. This dummy is so balanced and arranged that it tilts up and down, or on either side, just as a machine in the air would do. The levers are arranged so that the pupil rights himself by winding the right wheel. (The Antoinette machines employ wheels for governing.) The next step is to ride with the instructor, who sits immediately behind the pupil. Eventually, of course, the pupil flies by himself, and obtains his brevet when he makes three separate flights of a fixed length in each of which he must rise from the ground within a certain distance of starting, and land within 150 metres of a fixed spot. I saw on one occasion a Russian officer pass his brevet. The Russians appear at the schools in force. Why not send some of our officers? There is no shame in learning from our French cousins. Assuredly as a race they are far ahead of us at aviation at the present time. Certainly we may have men in England to be proud of, but here in France so many men can fly; the schools are numerous, practical, and up

to date. Aviation may still be a most risky business, but this risk can be lessened a thousand-fold by a skilled pilot. Of the two kinds of machines the experts here seem to favour the monoplane. They still complain of having no suitable and reliable engine except the revolving gnome. The gnome is not powerful enough for some machines—to wit, the Hanriot. And it also has a comparatively short life.

## CHAPTER IX

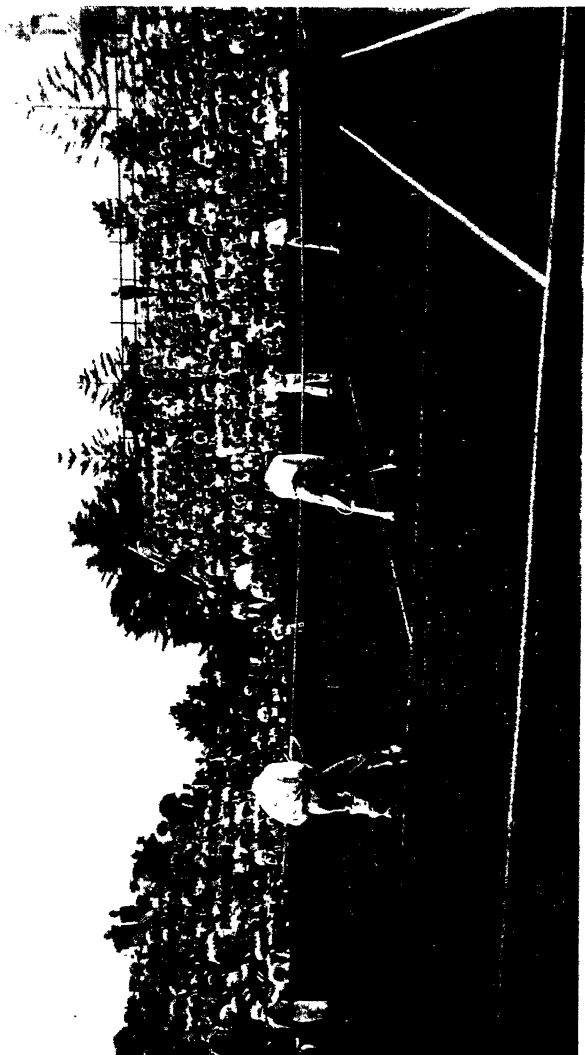
### AUSTRALASIA

AS in England, and every other country, so in Australia—international rivalry fostered by the Davis Cup has done more to advance lawn tennis as a popular pastime and to raise it to its present high standard than any other agency. The visit of the Americans, Beals Wright and F. B. Alexander, to Melbourne in 1908 revealed the actualities of lawn tennis in a new and powerful light. Some Australians nourished the idea that lawn tennis was a mild pastime requiring a little skill but none of the athletic qualities essential in cricket. The struggle between Norman Brookes and Beals Wright exposed that fallacy once and for all. Imagine a hot north wind, 102° F. in the shade, nearly seven thousand people taking any little air there was, two sets all, and the result of the Davis Cup probably

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depending on the fifth set. Had they not been assiduously trained, both men must have succumbed on the spot. The excitement of that match, as of all the others, was universal and intense. The fifth set see-sawed alternately; Australia and then America held the advantage until ten games all was called. At the crucial moment Wright seemed to have a shade more reserve than Brookes and just won on the post. But there was not a man on the ground who did not realize that the match had been one of the most challenging tests of stamina and fortitude ever imposed in the realm of sport.

The doubles match the previous day, in which Wright and Alexander played Brookes and myself, was another nerve-racking tussle. We all appreciated how much depended on this result, yet, in spite of the responsibility, the all-round play, it is only fair to state, was distinctly above form. Australia won the first two sets, the Americans the third and fourth, all the sets being close and exciting. Our opponents got the first three



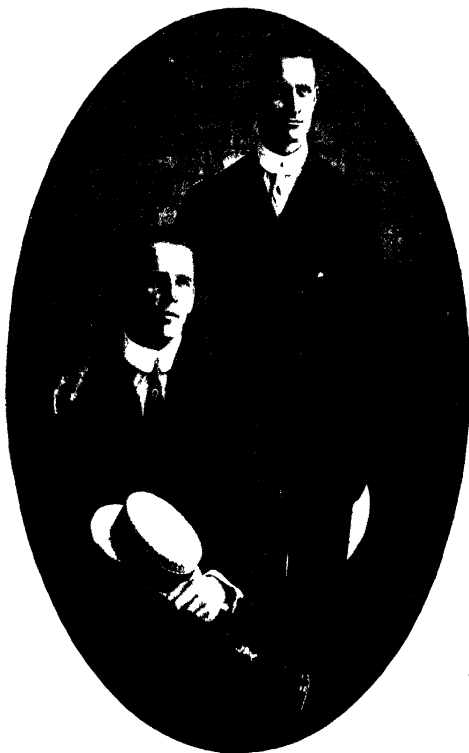
*Beds Wright*

*F. B. Alexander*

*J. F. H.*

*N. E. Brookes*

THE FIVE-SET INTERNATIONAL DOUBLE AT MELBOURNE, 1908



HEALS C. WRIGHT AND F. B. ALEXANDER (AMERICA)  
*Our Davis Cup Opponents, Melbourne, 1908*



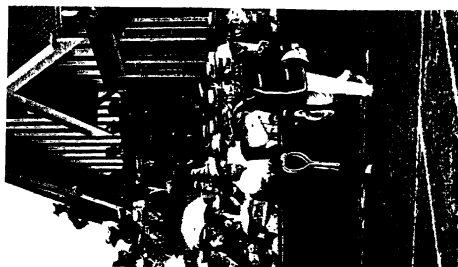
games in the fifth set—an advantage which, in a fast double, on a fast court and in a bright light, is a strong winning lead. But at this crisis in our fate Brookes, who had temporarily declined, came back to form with a rush. The games were soon four all and after a very anxious half-hour we had won the final set at 7-5. It had literally been a case of fighting for every stroke from first to last. I have never participated in a finer double, and I never want to. Yet despite the keen rivalry, and the importance attached to the result, good-fellowship and the best sportsmanship prevailed throughout. I recall that our drinks, very necessary in 102° F., were common property. Any little doubt about decisions was settled amicably by the players themselves. We never resorted to that most painful of painful episodes, an argument between umpires and players in the middle of a match.

I was called upon to play the deciding match against Alexander, but he appeared to be more overawed by the importance of

the occasion than I was. Thus Australasia won the most exciting Davis Cup contest ever held, or I should think ever likely to be held for many a long day. Wright and Alexander made themselves popular in no uncertain measure. They took part in the Victorian championships at Melbourne, and Alexander journeyed over to Sydney and played in the New South Wales championships. In this event he beat A. W. Dunlop after a good match in the final. Later he returned home via Europe and carried all before him on the Riviera, defeating, amongst others, H. L. Doherty.

Without doubt this international spirit infused new life into the game; it was exactly the tonic Australia needed. Men of the type of Beals Wright and Alexander appealed at once to the Australian mind, and the bare fact that men of such attractive personality were connected with lawn tennis did much to advance the game in popular favour.

The Davis Cup challenge round of 1909 was played in Sydney, where extensive



*N. P. Brander A. F. H.*



*R. C. Wright F. B. Haven*

GOING INTO COURT FOR THE DAVIS CUP DOUBLE (ALSTRAALIA VS. AMERICA) MEET COURT, 1908



M. H. LONG AND M. E. MCLOUGHLIN (AMERICA)  
*Our Davis Cup Opponents, Sydney, 1909*

arrangements were made for providing good courts and public accommodation on the newly purchased ground of the New South Wales Lawn Tennis Association. But it must be confessed the Sydney arrangements fell short of those in Melbourne the previous year. Our opponents on this occasion were McLoughlin and Long, two young Americans hailing from the Pacific Coast. Cable messages put them down as eighteen years apiece, but on landing one was found to have grown two, and the other three, years. Even then they were very young men for tackling a Davis Cup proposition—though they were a trifle older than I was when, an undergraduate at Cambridge, I was first invited to play for Australasia at Queen's Club. They showed singularly erratic form in practice, and even the thoughtfully quiet and shrewd Brookes underestimated their powers. Not that he went about declaring our superiority, but he privately confided to me that we need not worry.

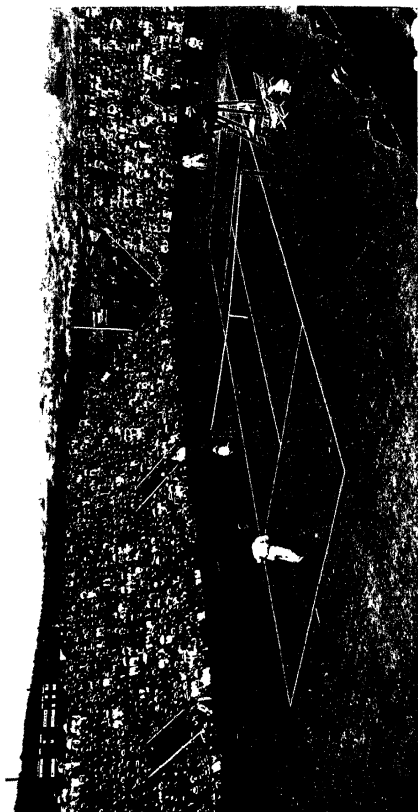
We won the contest by five matches to love, but except on the first day, when the

American boys appeared too nervous to do themselves justice, we had to play all the way to win. In the doubles the sets went to an interminable length, each player winning his service again and again. This was partly due to the fact that both the Americans had rattling good services and were excellent volleyers, and partly to the fact that the courts were distinctly below par and made the service game a certainty, bar accidents, to the server. In the singles on the final day Long should have won a set from Brookes but failed at the critical point. He also made a good fight in the other two sets. McLoughlin won the first set from me but after this effort appeared to have blunted all his weapons.

McLoughlin's style is reminiscent of the Karl Behr of 1907—that is to say, he endeavours to make every volley a winner. He has a magnificent service, though he may at present be given to double faults. When in one of his inspired moments, and hitting accurately, he can pierce the strongest defence ever constructed. It is clear



M. E. McLOUGHLIN SERVING



*-I. F. II-*

*M. E. McLoughlin*

DAVIS CUP CHALLENGE ROUND, SYDNEY, 1909



from his performance against Norman Brookes at Christchurch last January that he is now in the very first flight. Indeed, I doubt whether any player in America would stand a better chance of winning the Championship at Wimbledon. Like Gobert and Laurentz, he has jumped into fame at an auspicious moment. The game pursued by these players, it may be noted, is quite dissimilar to the game of the Dohertys. The strokes of McLoughlin and Laurentz are the latest word in lawn tennis. They are strokes which Renshaw never contemplated. They show that the evolution of the game is still proceeding, and will proceed further.

Before departing from Australian shores the American boys played an exhibition match against Dunlop and Heath. The Victorians beat them, but in justice to McLoughlin and Long it must be remembered that after a strenuous bout of training, culminating in a Davis Cup contest, they had experienced a fortnight's complete rest.

Of Australian players I have already had

something to say of Brookes. A. W. Dunlop, who partnered Brookes at Christchurch in the Davis Cup double last January, is well known in England. He is a delightful player, free, accurate and straightforward, his *forte* being the double game. His service is not very strong, the second ball being weak. But his remarkable volleying ability does much to cover this deficiency. Overhead and off the ground his play tends more in the direction of accuracy than severity. He has a particularly pretty backhand stroke, executed far more in the English style than in the usual Colonial method, a method which holds the racket perpendicularly and points the elbow skyward. As a tactician Dunlop is second to none.

Rod Heath is now one of the finest players in Australasia, and his recent success in New Zealand when he beat Larned has set a seal on his fame. He is fortunate in that his father is very keen on his son's success, and is sporting enough to show that enthusiasm by material assistance. The very flourishing Victorian Lawn Tennis Association

owes much of its prosperity to Mr Heath, who has worked hard and given freely on its behalf. Rod Heath is a player who has lived in a tennis atmosphere all his life. He has stuck to his business, but ample time has been allowed him to play. His advance has been slow but sure, and now, still a young player, he has established his superiority over such first-class men as H. A. Parker and Horace Rice, and practically every other player in Australasia. Being a fellow-townsmen of Norman Brookes he has enjoyed advantages difficult to estimate. At the same time, all credit is due to Heath for his personal efforts; without self-help he would have made no progress. His game is modelled in many respects on that of Brookes. Thus his forehand drive is his best stroke, and a remarkably fine shot to boot.

Harry Parker is so well known everywhere that it is hardly necessary to describe his play. I have found it a very good plan when opposing him to anticipate his return on the opposite side of the court to which

you are sure he is going to aim. His forehand stroke is quite unique and varies in accuracy according to the degree of training in which Parker happens to find himself. Occasionally he has rheumatism in certain of the joints which seem essential to a series of movements culminating in his famous drive. But provided his training is perfect, and there is no uric acid in his system, this forehand drive is something to make the very best player thoughtful about. Owing to the great amount of top spin imparted, the ball dives like a vol-planing areoplane. Of late years he has sacrificed speed to accuracy, and his terrific dipping drive is no longer quite the same deadly weapon in his hands.

Horace Rice, Parker's great rival, is a curly-headed little man who still remains loyal to his knickerbockers. He has represented New South Wales for over twenty years and is still one of the best players in the state. His method of attack resembles Parker's in that it is chiefly from the back line. His backhand is a peculiar one of his own, and for effectiveness and ugliness com-



H. A. PARKER



HORACE RICE

bined I have never seen anything to approach it. He takes it in the approved Australian elbow-out manner with a horizontal racket. Personally, after watching, playing against and using both methods of backhand, I am convinced the English type is the one to acquire.

Dr G. G. Sharpe rightly devotes more time to his medical duties than to tennis ; consequently tennis is the loser and the medical profession of Sydney the gainer. But he is a very fine natural player, and when at his best is capable of holding his own with Heath, Rice and Parker.

Stanley Doust leapt into fame during the English season of 1909 and 1910. During these two years he gained and rightly deserved to hold, a tremendous reputation as a doubles and mixed doubles player. He did so the more easily as the standard of English doubles was at this period very low. But there is no question as to his being a remarkably fine player. Much of his efficiency is due to his exceptional pace about the court, and his clever command of the angles in a

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double. A thorough knowledge of angles, combined with accuracy to take advantage of that knowledge, is a wonderful asset. Doust has a sufficient command of the ball on the volley to direct it to the most remote and unexpected regions. His service is weak, and his ground play a little patchy and wanting in accuracy ; but he deals with anything on the fly with a precision and deftness equalled by few. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Doust is that he attained his present proficiency by consistent play in English tournaments. His performances in Australia were never of the sensational order and his record in the Antipodes was different from his great and well-merited success in England.

South Australia and West Australia both fall a little below the standard set by the two eastern states. But R. G. Bowen, Roy Taylor, of South Australia, and Ernie Parker are all players capable of extending the elect. Bowen has his business to attend to and of late years has allowed his joints to get a little stiff. He has won many great



matches in the annals of Australian tennis, and his style might well be taken as a model for the young Australian wishing to succeed. Taylor showed great promise but has not yet quite redeemed it, though he has still time to climb up and defeat the best players in Australia. In Western Australia "Ernie" Parker is the idol of the sport-loving population. Unfortunately for Australian tennis, Parker is a cricketer before a tennis player. He is one of the finest bats in Australia and has done many fine performances against English elevens. As a tennis player he is good, but having given most of his time to cricket his tennis has been handicapped. Nevertheless he is fifteen better than any other player in the western province.

As regards courts in Australia, the grass court a few years back was considered a great luxury, and only people prepared to spend a great deal of money and time on watering and rolling could afford one. But now all the big associations have splendid grass courts of their own. In all cases this very desirable result is due to diplomatic

negotiation, and to the expenditure of personal time by patriotic individual members. It is a good example of Colonial sportsmanship combined with Colonial business acumen. For an impecunious association to take up a very valuable plot of land and on it to construct courts and pavilion is no light undertaking ; there had to be a guarantee and a system of life membership by which the necessary sum was raised. Thanks to two very successful Davis Cup contests, and the fact that the players competed at the local championships, the two associations' grounds are now firmly established.

Following the lead of the associations, a great number of private grass courts have recently been laid down. In South Australia, it may be explained, a grass known as "couch-grass" is employed. Its peculiar properties are that it grows best in sand, flourishes in a hot sun and does not require regular watering, although this last advantage is now not so difficult to obtain since all the large coast towns have an abundance of water. The Western Aus-

tralia Association are a singularly enterprising body, and have recently constructed a magnificent new ground, an effort towards which material assistance was rendered by the town council of Perth. The mere fact that Australasia has now so many excellent courts tends towards developing talent. In Western Australia I found almost the keenest tennis community I have ever met. A number of players also indulge in cricket, but this versatility did not militate against their keenness for tennis.

Of course players throughout Australia and New Zealand have many advantages over their European brothers. The climate enables anyone so minded to play all the year round, although, as a matter of fact, most men who are wise take an off season. Again, some branches of business are slacker at one time of the year than at another and thus a man who during the summer months has little or no time at his disposal can play several times a week during the winter. Nor is it impossible in Australian cities to leave a stuffy office and be on a tennis court

in a few minutes. There need be no resource to taxis, electric trams or tubes, the inevitable preliminary to a game in London or its environments. And then in England it may rain either before you start or before you get through your match. Climate means a lot in life apart from tennis, and in this respect the great superiority of Australian weather has to be experienced to be understood.

On the other hand, Australian players are handicapped by the great and often prohibitive distances which separate one lawn tennis centre from another. Few English people realize that it takes longer to go from Sydney to Perth than from England to America, or that a five or six days' journey over water resembling anything but a mill-pond separates New Zealand from Australia. I have actually been asked how long the ferry boats take to run across from Australia to New Zealand, and my answer of "Only a tuppenny trip" has been accepted in solemn seriousness. Fortunately there is now an excellent inter-

colonial service, supplemented by a certain number of the large P. & O. liners which continue their voyage from Australia to Auckland. Once in Auckland, good and comfortable Government railways (with no strikes) connect up the entire dominion. But what a difference in time and expense between an All England team going to Cambridge, or even an Irish team going to Germany, and a New Zealand team going to Sydney or a Sydney team to Perth!

At present the game in Australia is fortunate in that its government and organization is in the hands of a number of most influential and sporting men. The Victorian Association made wonderful arrangements for the first Davis Cup held in Australia. To me it appears quite impossible to imagine anything more complete or more carefully arranged and carried out than was every detail connected with that meeting. It is impossible to enumerate all the gentlemen responsible, but Mr John Koch, the honorary secretary, can be held up as a model. Let me add that the standard of lawn

tennis in Australia has improved and is improving. In years to come I have no doubt as to the ability of its players to hold their own with England, Germany, France and all the Continental countries. America I have not visited yet, but from a fairly extensive experience of their players and a fairly intimate knowledge of their system of play and opportunities, and the amount of interest taken in the game, I am rather prone to think they will eventually get the Davis Cup, and probably keep it until something very extra special springs up elsewhere. As in everything else, the Americans go to work systematically and thoroughly, mixing brains with play. But it is the overwhelming number of players in America that will knock Australia if they ever do manage it. If the East doesn't happen to have anybody up to the mark they merely have to call on the West, where McLoughlins, Longs and Bundys appear to flourish in abundance. However, apart from this reflection, Australia has a host of promising players, and it rests with the gods to decide

whether any of them will develop into first-fighters.

Lord Dudley, when Viceroy of Australia, endeared himself to the sport-loving Australians by proving a good golfer, cricketer and lawn tennis player. He took the greatest possible interest in the Davis Cup of 1908 and was loth to miss a stroke of the series of matches. Just before sailing for New Zealand after the Melbourne match I received a charming little note from him. Amongst other advice he gave me was not to let law interfere too much with tennis. I have thought that suggestion carefully over and have acted upon it.

Australians, though democratic to a degree in most matters, have a few women whose one aim in life appears to be society "climbing." Two ladies of this type arrived at the courts to watch a fine match between Brookes and a New South Wales representative. They obtained excellent seats, but immediately vacated them and commenced a pilgrimage round the court. Eventually, after ten minutes, they came

to anchor in two seats just in front of where I was standing. Their view was entirely shut off, and not a stroke could be seen. My mind was ponderously turning over the eccentricities of the feminine sex when the problem was suddenly solved by the elder lady saying to the younger, "At last, my dear! How lovely! What a splendid view we have of the Governor!"

In Australia good-looking and well-groomed Englishmen are always received with open arms, and if by chance they say they are of noble lineage so much the better—this declaration often covers a multitude of other little deficiencies. In this connexion I recall an incident of one of my voyages. A "leader of society" was on board, returning from England. Among the other passengers was an exceptionally good-looking young man, always immaculately dressed—waisted clothes, brogue shoes, silk socks of multi-coloured hues, hair greased down, not a single hair astray—altogether a personage such as to make the female heart flutter. Mrs X. immedi-



ately fastened on to him and soon discovered that his manners, though savouring rather of the shop, were nevertheless as beautiful as his clothes. It was never necessary to call the deck steward to move her chair to the windward side ; every little need was anticipated. The acquaintance-ship ripened into friendship and it was arranged that the faultless young man should come up and stay at Madame's palatial mansion on the ship's arrival. But at the last moment, thinking his position might be a little awkward, he confessed to Mrs X. that he was travelling on business. Yes, he was connected with the — Corset Co. I need hardly add the invitation there and then lapsed and the friendship collapsed like a pack of cards.

Australian people have a personality and temperament entirely their own. They are quite unlike New Zealanders, and yet again differ widely from the English. Climate has a great deal to do with the formation of national character. The Australian woman is as well educated, as well dressed,

and certainly has as much vivacity, as her English prototype. The girls are trained to be dependent on themselves and not upon others. You can never tell in Australia and New Zealand when households boasting one, two or four servants are to be confronted with a miniature strike. Often during race week, the great time for holidays and rejoicings in most Australian towns, the housemaids say good-bye and walk out to amuse themselves. Under these circumstances brothers and sisters have to turn to and run the roost. Servants in Australia are, indeed, a very live trouble. They are treated almost as superiors by their employers; they are given as many holidays as they like to demand; and an ordinary maid never gets less than thirty pounds a year.

Melbourne Cup Week is one of the most delightful festivals in the world, where Australians from every part of the world contrive to meet and enjoy themselves. Racing is of the very first order. The course and appointments at Flemington

are without doubt the finest in the whole world. The race for the Melbourne Cup is generally run before a crowd of forty to fifty thousand, and the scene is altogether remarkable for its brilliancy. There are large balls every night, including one at Government House, given by the Governor-General. The Australians dance very well and with great zest. Indeed, they are a pleasure-loving people. The drama and music appeal far more to the Australians than to the English. They possess the Continental trait of abandon and seem to take their amusements gaily, in the spirit that they should be taken. There is none of that serious air so common with many English people even when they are in the midst of a confetti fête at Nice.

We in New Zealand are a trifle heavier than the Australian. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to believe when in New Zealand one is not in Hereford or some other pretty English county town. But the climate soon dispels the illusion. It is eminently suitable for lawn tennis all the

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year round, although during the winter months asphalt must be substituted for grass. Asphalt is used extensively, and if well laid makes an excellent surface. Once constructed and marked out these courts require practically no supervision. The Continental type of sand court, if firmly laid, is undoubtedly superior for all-the-year-round play, but it requires watering and rolling. A light frost at night and a brilliant sun all day is our usual winter weather. Such conditions are ideal for tennis.

Lawn tennis in New Zealand is particularly popular and extensively played. At present the standard is not very high. But some years ago a team from Maoriland went to Sydney and inflicted a severe defeat on the best team in New South Wales. Nevertheless at the present time the standard in Australia is distinctly above that in New Zealand. The community is not yet educated up to Sunday club play, but private courts abound and most of their owners manage to work off some of the adipose

tissue accumulated during the week. Tournaments are rare. A few at Christmas and Easter virtually begin and end the fixture list. However, local inter-club matches and inter-provincial matches keep the competitive spirit alive. All classes play. The class distinctions as recognized in England and on the Continent do not exist in New Zealand—and it might be added in all the other British Colonies. Of course clubs vary considerably in social importance. But all players are friends on the field and off, and there is no place in Colonial communities for the snob. I think perhaps New Zealanders take the game more seriously than the usual run of players in most other countries. The average devotee in New Zealand, far removed from the centre of the tennis world, cannot run up to Wimbledon in under six weeks to see B. volley or A. make his famous forehand drive, or to study any of the experts executing their famous strokes. Each man has to make his own tennis. Thus it comes about that the New Zealander, never having seen

any better player than the club champion, has to work out his own salvation. He has to imagine—if possible—something more effective than the local expert's play. As the local champion can probably give the student thirty and a beating, it is difficult for him to believe that anything more pulverizing than the local champion's methods exists.

It is a familiar sight at any club in the Colonies to see a group of players armed with rackets executing imaginary strokes and then arguing on the probable results and efficiency of such strokes. Then the point will swing round and the same group will try to explain to each other how some great English player makes his strokes, or discuss how Beals Wright killed every lob during a five-set match in the Davis Cup. Again, these players are not averse to forgoing their usual match in favour of some stroke practice. As soon as they become too serious games lose their object; but, on the other hand, if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well. Therefore the



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man who, when he does play, plays with all his ability, and occasionally backs his manual work with brain work, is to be admired. At the present time many English players are inclined to take everything for granted. If victory crowns their effort all is well. If, on the other hand, they lose, instead of stopping awake all night cursing themselves for duffers and resolving to make that feeble second service—or whatever else was mainly responsible for their downfall—a weapon of attack and not defence, they shelve the whole matter until it is brought up again by their next defeat. The Colonial, despite the fact that he attends to his business affairs more tightly than the average Englishman, is ever thinking and searching for the reason of his defeat, and immediately it is found attempts to remedy the defect. What one really misses in England to-day amongst the rising generation are players of the type of the late H. S. Mahony. Mahony was a student before a player, just as critics have said of Mr Balfour that he is a philosopher before a politician.

There are many English and Colonial players who murmur to themselves, "No wonder X. becomes a champion when he has so many chances to improve!" But they are only nursing a fallacy. Without opportunities the Dohertys could never have become the famous champions they were; but who shall deny that hundreds of other men have not had virtually the same chances? You cannot alter the fact that these two players added genius to opportunity and thus evolved their success. Their art was born as well as made. They never required to pay much attention to style and the execution of their strokes, as old Mahony was for ever doing. Neither was it necessary for them to fall back on endurance and concentration to win their matches. Their style was before all else easy and natural. In short, it was second nature.

One final word about the standard of ladies' play in Australasia. It is at present distinctly below that of England, yet in Miss Nunneley New Zealand has a player who, if she had remained in Eng-

land, would most assuredly have won the Championship. She won the Championship of New Zealand with the regularity of clock-work for thirteen consecutive years. Now we have other players up to her high standard, and last year a representative ladies' team journeyed to Sydney and inflicted a severe defeat on the New South Wales team. The lady players of New Zealand do not, I think, quite realize what a great deal Miss Nunneley has done in developing their game. It was because she set a high standard for years that young players had a definite mark at which to aim. If Miss Nunneley had remained in England a representative ladies' team of six would have less chance of success in Australia than would a men's team. Credit where credit is due.

It has always been a source of regret to all tennis players throughout Australia and New Zealand that no English team has ever visited our shores. Some day I hope this stain will be removed.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME ADVICE TO LADIES

*By Mrs Larcombe*

ADVICE usually starts with the assumption that there is room for improvement, so perhaps I shall be forgiven if I find fault at the beginning.

Everyone will admit, I think, that the chief error among ladies is the tendency to develop one particular stroke at the expense of all others. This stroke as a rule is the forehand drive from the right corner across diagonally to the opposite corner. Except in tournaments very few ladies really play singles—if they do it is more for the pleasure of beating a rival than for the benefit of practice—and in doubles it is easily seen how very useful is this forehand drive. In mixed doubles it is especially so, putting the opposing lady right out of



MRS. LARCOMBE



position, and at the same time avoiding the man at the net. But—and this is what most improving players do not realize—one stroke cannot be made to serve for all occasions. This cultivation of the forehand leads inevitably to a corresponding weakness in the backhand, a fault very hard to eradicate. In a double an active base-liner can “run round” most balls that would otherwise come to her backhand, but in a single it is practically impossible to defend a weak backhand successfully.

As for volleying—well, the two things are incompatible. One cannot have a weak backhand and be a volleyer. At the net the stroke must be taken as it comes, so to speak. There is no time to adopt any other position, no time to “run round.” Possibly this weakness on the backhand is the cause of the dislike of volleying prevalent among ladies, although that is partly due also I fancy to lack of initiative, which is another of their great faults. They are so content with the same old strokes, the same degree of proficiency. Now content-

ment may be a beautiful trait in their characters, but it has a most depressing effect on their tennis! Certainly ladies' tennis as a rule—I am not of course speaking of the “stars”—gives the spectator a sensation of dullness. There is an absence of “headwork,” of intention. They seem to lack not only the ability to change their tactics, or to make an unexpected stroke, but even the desire to do so.

The necessity for any alteration is not usually apparent to them either. One frequently sees a player give her opponent the same opening time after time, simply because she has not realized that off the stroke she is continually playing her opponent makes perhaps her best shot. Against a former enemy, possibly, this pet stroke of hers has been of great value, or has even scored outright, and she has not enough “headwork” to see that in this case different tactics are needed. Of course the cultivation of the one stroke tends a little to this blindness of the brain. A lady possessing a hard drive is apt to think it



the best weapon for every occasion, and one seldom sees her making use of all the strokes in even a limited repertory. I should like to see ladies employing every kind of shot, making each one with a definite intention, and above all taking notice of the results. This mental noting leads to the development of anticipation, a most useful asset in singles or doubles. Various defences, naturally, are offered to various attacks, and anticipation is merely the discovery of the most usual reply given to any particular form of the one or the other.

By way of excuse, however, for the absence of variety in ladies' play, I may say that they seldom have the same chances as men, either of learning or improving. All men, for instance, even as beginners, volley as a matter of course, while ladies are invariably taught from the base-line—a fact which probably accounts for their future affection for it and reluctance to leave it. If they ever do begin to volley they are apt to look a trifle foolish, causing perhaps a little unkind laughter, but if only they

would persevere, the laughter would be entirely on their side. Apart from its efficacy the actual pleasure of volleying is worth any amount of awkward apprenticeship, and, after all, no one at the first attempt can expect to do correctly anything in the way of an unusual action.

Personally, of course, I was extraordinarily fortunate. I began tennis at the age of seven, and as my mother was one of the few volleyers then playing, I was taught to volley from the very start. So that, besides inheriting a love of the game and a natural aptitude for it, I had the best of tuition when very young, and it is to this early teaching that I owe everything. My advice on this point, therefore, would appear to be to the next generation rather than to this one: Begin young, be well taught, as early as possible.

The rudiments of the game—and the racket—having been grasped, perfection can be attained only by practice; but of the amount required and the methods to be adopted I find it rather difficult to speak. I

have always, in ordinary "scratch" games, tried to improve weaknesses, to develop new strokes, and to be more accurate with "old" ones; but I have never practised against a wall, and I have never played during the winter. Several players advocate winter play as a means of improvement, but I cannot help thinking that the freshness, the extra zest and delight with which one returns to the game after an absence of some months are worth more than any possible advantage gained by playing all the year round. On a point of this sort, however, I do not wish to lay down the law, or to suggest that anyone should blindly follow my advice. Owing, I suppose, to my early teaching I am quicker than most players at what is called "getting into form." But on one branch I can speak from somewhat bitter experience, and that is the desirability in doubles of being able to play in either court. From my earliest recollection I have been put in the left court, possibly because I possessed a better backhand than most of my club-

mates. With my most regular partners, Mrs Chambers, Miss W. A. Longhurst and Mr S. H. Smith, I invariably played left, the inevitable result being that I became so attached to that court as to be miserable in the right. So I would advise everyone to practise from both courts—to develop strokes useful in either—and then if they happen to play with a partner who prefers their “ pet court ” they will not be, as I am, useless in the other one.

Much as I love volleying, and preach it on all occasions for doubles, I am not a great advocate of it for singles, although, as in most questions, there are arguments to be advanced on both sides. Those *for* volleying are of course very strong. A volleyed return gives one's opponent less time to recover position and consequently less chance of making a good stroke. From the net one has a much greater likelihood of making a winning shot, and so finishing the rally, than from the back of the court. It pays any lady who can volley at all to follow up a short ball, but in that case she

has already covered a part of the distance to the net before making her stroke, and so has only a few yards farther to go. Also, off a short ball, she should be able to force a weak return, which is easily "killed," and it is this fact which is so often overlooked when spectators admire a winning volley—the fact that the point was really made with the previous stroke.

The chief argument *against* is the loss of energy. The effort necessary for a lady to reach the net from a good length ball is tremendous, and thus her more advantageous position is gained at too great a cost. In my own case, to volley consistently against a good opponent would mean that I had scarcely enough energy to go through one set, much less a possible three. Women are always derided, I know, for arguing from the personal rather than the general, but I can only give my own experience, and add some reasons showing perhaps that the argument is sensible generally as well as personally. Men, with a longer stride, can get to the net more quickly than ladies, and

have a greater reach when there, but even the best volleyers are impotent against a hard driver like Mr S. H. Smith. Now ladies, relatively speaking, have more "drive" than men. I do not, of course, mean that they hit anything like as hard, but, as I said before, most ladies cultivate a forehand drive, whereas many men rely almost entirely on their cleverness at the net, their ground strokes, although accurately placed, having no great pace on them. This means that—still speaking relatively—a lady volleyer has more opposition in the way of hard driving than a man. Another difficulty, too, is dealing with lobs. A lady, right up at the net, is almost helpless if lobbed over, while a man is quick enough as a rule to turn back and chase a lob and even to make a good return off it.

However, I do not wish to deter coming volleyers from using that form of attack in a single. Each player must weigh the arguments for herself. In my own case I can only repeat that my energy—and my legs—won't run to it.

Other questions relating to the reserving of power are : when a rally should be given up ; when a possible ball should be attempted ; when it should be left alone—and these are questions which must be judged and decided individually, the determining factors being the state of the game and the condition of the player herself. Certainly some points seem to cost more than they are worth. Time and again, as a spectator, one sees a player save a rally with a Herculean effort, and eventually perhaps make the point, only to lose the next two or three from the effect of the physical and mental strain.

I am frequently told that I am lazy—that I don't try for several balls that I could reach with an effort ; but I had one very severe lesson which perhaps is worth quoting. Playing against Miss Sutton at Wimbledon, the first year she came over, I led 5-2 in the first set. During the eighth game there was one tremendous rally which I refused to give up. I ran from side to side, making marvellous recoveries in what

I *then* considered a plucky manner. *Now* I know it was pure cowardice—the fear that people would think I was “giving in,” not “trying”! Whether I won that point or not I cannot remember, but anyway I was so “cooked” that I was practically helpless for the rest of the match, and won only one more game. And not only that, but was advised by my doctor not to play singles for the rest of the season. Here, if anyone wants it, is a terrible example of the foolishness of an extravagant output of energy over one little point.

In doubles, to misquote the old saying about leather, there is nothing like volleying. The branch of the game on which I am keenest is mixed doubles, but I honestly think I should never play these if I were a base-liner. Under those conditions, to my mind, the lady has all the “kicks” and none of the “ha’pence”—all the work and none of the fun. Her best efforts only provide a lovely opening for her partner, who makes the winning shot, and probably thinks in consequence that he deserves all



the praise. Her faults, on the other hand, are exaggerated in a most uncomfortable manner. As she bears the burden of the play, and has the additional difficulty of avoiding the man at the net, any stroke of hers which is not absolutely good appears thoroughly bad. If she plays perhaps not quite as well as usual her partner will feel—and possibly say—that “she put every ball on the man’s racket”! A volleyer may make actually the same number of mistakes, but playing at the net they are not so apparent. They are usually straight into the net or out of court, and do not “give away” her partner in the same manner. From the standpoint of enjoyment the two positions cannot be compared, in fact the situation is almost entirely reversed. A lady playing at the net has all the “happence,” very few “kicks,” and certainly most of the fun. She does not, as at the base-line, bear the brunt of the attack—her best strokes are winners, evoking (I hope) a cry of “good shot” from her partner—while her worst ones are over and

done with so quickly that he has scarcely time even to notice them.

For ladies' doubles the accepted formation now is "one up, one back," and really this is almost the only way in which the game can be played with any degree of pleasure. The old "ladies' four," with all the players at the back of the court, was a test of patience and endurance rather than of skill at tennis. "Both up," the other alternative, in theory sounds delightful, but in practice is usually found to be unworkable. The inevitable attack by lobbing is bound to force one of the pair to the back of the court, and if she attempts to volley consistently she will spend all her time and energy running up to the net and scurrying back again after lobs. It is possible perhaps for the better player to be a sort of half-court volleyer advancing to about the service-line. This enables her to run behind her partner in time to volley lobs, but it is a very difficult position, and necessitates a good deal of that uncomfortable volleying from the region of the toes. The "one up, one

back" method is really the easiest, and, with this idea, a volleyer usually pairs with a base-liner, the latter providing the openings with clever placing and hard drives, and the volleyer taking advantage of any opportunity at the net. I am not a great believer in "poaching," if it means the indiscriminate taking of one's partner's balls. This upsets her, and generally leaves the volleyer out of position. But if it means making an almost certain point, then the net player should by all means take the ball, wherever it is. In short, her maxim should be "Poach to kill, but not otherwise."

Lest I seem, in advocating "one back," to contradict my former statement that in doubles there is nothing like volleying, let me hasten to add that, should necessity demand, it is very useful for the base-liner to be able to volley. She may be drawn up to the net with a cunning drop-shot—she may want a temporary rest from her labours at the back of the court—or the conditions may not suit her particular kind

of drive. Miss Longhurst and I have more than once proved the advantage of this ability to change positions. On a wet court her "top spin" drive is sometimes less effective than my "cut." On such occasions I retire to the base-line, and Miss Longhurst advances to the net, where, although she laughs at herself, she performs extremely well.

Combination, as a factor in the success of any pair, is apt to be regarded too lightly, in England at all events. It is worth very much more than the surface value placed upon it by most people, who think that any two players can "get on" together, if they have perhaps two or three practice games before an important match. But, apart from the fact that their actual tennis strokes may not be at all suitable to each other, there is the very-difficult-to-deal-with question of temperament.

With regard to the first "half"—their tennis—similarity of style is not always to be recommended. In ladies' doubles, as I have said, it is usual for the volleyer to pair

with the base-liner. In mixed doubles the two varieties of the game necessitate totally different kinds of partnership. If the lady is a base-liner she wants a partner who will stay right "on" the net, ready to "kill" anything in the nature of a loose ball—one who will never lose his commanding position by "edging back." A volleyer, on the other hand, needs a partner who is always *ready* to "edge back"—ready to run behind her if necessary for lobs. The player who is farther back in the court must have the greater share of the work, and so, in the volleying mixed double, the man should never be as far up as the lady. Some men, like Mr Doust, find it possible to play either game as the occasion demands, but most as a rule greatly prefer one or other variety. A most striking instance of this is Mr Ritchie, who is not one of the poaching, right-on-the-net men necessary for the success of a mixed double with a base-line lady. But as a partner for a volleyer he is excellent, as, besides making his own sharp volleys and "kills," he is ready and willing to do the

“ donkey - work ” at the back of the court.

Temperament, the other “ half ” of combination—I am inclined to think it even “ three-quarters ”—is too vague a thing about which to be dogmatic. It is well-nigh impossible to arrive at anything approaching a definition of the word. One hears it said of some players that they have not the “ temperament ” for tennis, but if the speaker is asked what he means by that, he invariably replies, “ Oh, they can’t keep their tempers,” or “ They get upset by bad decisions.” These two unenviable characteristics, however, are due to a lack of control rather than actual temperament—a word which has a wider meaning and a greater significance than the mere keeping or loss of one’s temper. In doubles this is especially noticeable, the effect of two natures upon each other being not only very far-reaching, but impossible to predict. Any two temperaments may blend sympathetically, or they may, on the other hand, so affect each other that there is, and always

will be, a feeling of friction. Personality plays as great a part in tennis partnerships as in human life. There are people with whom one never feels quite at ease, and one would not dream of choosing a friend who always jarred upon one. So in tennis, there are partners with whom, even with the best will in the world, one cannot play a good double. Of course this is the extreme view, and in most cases the best possible results can be obtained with a certain amount of insight, and the judicious use of a little tact. The basis of all true sympathy is understanding and unselfishness, so one should try to understand one's partners' natures—to put oneself in their places—to find out their desires—their faults—their weaknesses. Temperaments vary in an almost incredible way, and one's methods of dealing with them should vary accordingly. Some partners like silence, other play all the better for a little encouragement ; some like brilliancy, others prefer steadiness ; some enjoy laughter over a bad stroke, others are annoyed if they suspect as much as a smile !

The golden rule might be framed somewhat as follows :—Study your partner's individuality, control your own, and try to obtain the best possible results from the sympathetic union of both.







ANDRÉ H. GOBERT

## CHAPTER XI

### FRANCE TO THE FRONT

*By André Gobert*

GLANCING through a chapter written a few years ago by Mr R. B. Hough, whose name is well known to all lawn tennis players, I read the following lines :—

“ It is hard for the English lawn tennis player, accustomed to having at least some time at his command, to realize the difficulties our neighbours in France, as in Switzerland, have to contend with in order to become proficient in the game. In both countries school life means one long, hard grind, with every minute taken up in the work of the day, or in preparing for that of the morrow. Even Sunday, for very many French scholars, brings no real freedom, and certainly no time which can be devoted to

sport. After school life, in France, comes military service. In Switzerland the game is looked upon by the elders with great disfavour."

It is curious to notice to what an extent matters have changed in this respect in the very short time which has elapsed since the writing of these lines. While a few years ago the young players found in their own homes the principal obstacle against the pursuit of their favourite sport, it is now quite customary for them to find—especially if they have already met with some degree of success—much help and enlightened encouragement in their families. The idea of sport is now adopted in France, the good of sport recognized, and it is at last understood that work and play can be combined and give excellent results. In this way has been overcome the only real obstacle which kept the Frenchman from occupying the place he deserves in the world of sport.

For many long years lawn tennis in France had remained stationary while it has

seemed lately to gain new life. I will try to point out what seems to me the reason of this welcome change.

As with most things in France the game soon became centralized in Paris. The creation of our dear old T.C.P. marked probably the most important date in the history of tennis over here. It was entirely due to the efforts of Mr A. Masson, so justly called the "Father of French Lawn Tennis," and consequently to him in great measure is due the development of this sport—the fact that it has emanated primally from Paris and slowly radiated thence throughout the whole country.

Until the year 1900 or thereabouts the French players could only boast of a fairly honourable standard of play. They considered the game more in the light of a pleasing pastime than as a real sport, and neglected all manner of training. At that moment the best players were the brothers André and Marcel Vacherot, P. Aymé, J. Worth, and Lebreton, all of whom greatly improved their game under the tuition of

T. Burke, the excellent professional. It is quite certain that the long spell of years spent by Burke and later by Marshall and Cowdrey at the T.C.P., allowed French players to advance, notwithstanding the dearth of international matches taking place at this period in France. Apart from the Paris tournament the principal meetings were those of Dinard, at which the French players often figured, that of Boulogne and those of the Riviera, which practically only included English competitors.

A new era opened with the growth of two young players, Maurice Germot and Max Decugis. The last-named player progressed by rapid bounds, and to the influence of his sojourn in England must be traced the completeness which characterized his game. As a boy he stayed several months at Woodford, Essex, and had many occasions of measuring his strength against that of very good players. Always a hard hitter, quick on the court, always ready to take any risks, he showed an entirely different disposition to that of his compatriots. Ger-

mot, for instance, who often played against him, had kept to the less forcible and more classic style of play, his inclinations and facilities alike leading him to adopt the volleying line. In 1901 Max Decugis, then nineteen years of age, began to be known in international events. He was beaten that year by G. M. Simond, but took his revenge the following Easter, also running Ritchie into a well-disputed five-set match. In 1902 he scored his first victory over Ritchie, afterwards winning the German championship and the London Covered Court Championship at Queen's. With Germot he represented France in the Olympic Games at Athens. With the same partner he figured in the Davis Cup competition at Wimbledon, where, owing to the different conditions of play on grass, rendered still more difficult by bad weather, they utterly failed to do themselves justice.

While these two players were thus making their names known in other countries, tennis in France was also making rapid strides. Everywhere clubs were surging up,

all along the coast and also in all the principal towns, Bordeaux, Lyon, with its covered courts, Lille, Le Havre, Tours, etc. Young players were steadily forming, and with more chances of meeting their superiors the standard of the game was considerably raised. Little by little, too, players were forming the habit of competing in foreign countries, in Switzerland, Germany, England, and even Sweden.

Under these favourable conditions, with numerous and well-organized meetings, both international and interclub, taking place more and more frequently, it is not astonishing if a few of us should have been able in a very short lapse of time to rise to distinction and to aspire to the highest honours. That is how, after having in 1910 put up an honourable defence at Queen's against Gordon Lowe, and having played a whole season in England, I managed to secure in the following winter (February 1911) my first championship of France. At the same moment Laurentz, my usual partner in doubles, made considerable progress, and



astonished the tennis world by the rapidity of his rise.

Why has tennis advanced so quickly in France in the past few years? It is somewhat difficult to give briefly an adequate answer to this question, for the reasons seem to me to be varied. I believe, first of all, that lawn tennis is eminently suited to the character and temperament of the Frenchman. He generally prefers the sports in which he depends on none but himself, where his liberty of action is whole and absolute, and where his responsibility is concerned only with himself. The conditions of the game suit his physical and his mental qualities—quickness, alertness, ardour, daring, prompt decision, “initiative.” As against these happy dispositions the Frenchman generally lacks that quality, fundamental in all English sport, equanimity of temperament which means patience, tenaciousness and calm.

The players now at the top of the game in France have also been singularly favoured by private circumstances. W. Laurentz,

studying at home with private tutors, finds time to play tennis a couple of hours every day. Decugis has been able during the last few years to devote most of his time to the pursuit of his favourite sport, and I myself have been able lately to practise as much as I could desire and to compete in the tournaments which to my judgment were the best suited to improve my game.

Another important factor has certainly been the arrangements made in most covered courts for allowing play at night by means of electric light. Thus the more occupied men are given the chance of playing in winter after business hours instead of seeing their practice time restricted to Sundays only.

It is also a sure fact that the Frenchmen's naturally strong, sometimes even violent, game was strengthened in that direction by the surface on which they have always practised. The hard courts and the covered courts have been great factors in bringing forward all those qualities. Every cut stroke was soon eliminated from our

game on account of its uselessness on a smooth surface. The service soon became a powerful arm of attack, for the ball in taking contact with the ground loses none of its impetus, and thus a service good enough to occasionally score outright was developed. The moral influence on the adversary of a stroke won in such an easy way is always very strong ; it is ever with a certain amount of apprehension that one meets players capable of scoring such strokes. To counterbalance this effect it was found necessary to oppose to these services returns of the same nature. Lobs were found useless and were killed outright ; it was found impossible in making use of a cut stroke to arrive at any degree of precision. Therefore our players were of necessity brought to drive back the ball, whatever its pace, and to take the risk of a stroke which, if more difficult to make, did not at least lead them at the very outset of the rally into a bad position.

The necessity of hitting certain strokes hard soon developed into the habit of

hitting every stroke hard, and with Decugis, who is a master in this art, as their nearly unique model, and owing also to the true and smooth surface provided by the hard courts and covered courts, perhaps some Frenchmen have exaggerated to a certain degree that tendency to hit out, and have neglected to develop at the same time that quality so necessary—steadiness.

On hard courts the ball can be said to have, practically speaking, an ideal bound: seldom if ever does it not arrive at the exact spot it is expected. The result has been that players are enabled to begin their swing very soon, even before the ball comes into contact with the ground. But this is also responsible for the tendency of players, especially covered court players, not to fix the ball attentively with their eyes during the stroke. For my part, I was extremely worried the first time I played on grass. I was always expecting a ball higher, straighter and quicker, and the false bounds put me completely off my game. I believe that the more play is developed in covered courts in

England the more difficult will English players find it to re-adapt themselves to the conditions of play on grass in summer.

Other reasons for the quick progress of the game in France are certainly the age at which the players take to the game and the methods they employ. Quite young boys now play a great deal, and although taking part in no very important event, and thereby remaining more or less unknown quantities, yet are able to play excellent second-class tennis. One constantly sees boys of thirteen, fourteen or fifteen putting up a very decent and often pretty game. Shall I mention that the championship of France for scholars under twenty years of age drew an entry of one hundred and fifty competitors and that it had to be divided into two classes, one for players under sixteen and one for players between sixteen and twenty. The winner of the event, J. Piel, was only fifteen and a half, but he had asked to be allowed to play in the top class. This same young player encountered W. Laurentz in the Easter tournament and only lost by

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6-4, 6-2. And he was older than Laurentz himself! These early beginnings give our players better adaptability to the game than is the share of most English players.

The method of learning the game is also quite different on this side of the Channel. While for nearly every English player the rule of conduct is to "get the ball over the net," over here on the contrary we try first to learn the strokes; to possess a hard service or a good drive or a good backhand is the first ambition of the beginner. The word "steady" is utterly unknown to him; he prefers sending nine balls wide of the mark if the tenth be a brilliant stroke that will fill his heart with joy. When they have well mastered the strokes, young players begin steadying down, evolving tactics and really learning the game itself. They have under their eyes three or four types of game, and they follow that which seems best adapted to them. Their own personality soon leaks out and completes their style.

A last point which has certainly been in

favour of my countrymen's quick advance is the fact that in no Paris club, and in very few of the other clubs, are the courts reserved. For instance, at the T.C.P., where there are but two courts for nearly one hundred and fifty players, everyone plays in their turn and without booking the court. Thus it constantly happens that weaker players slip into good doubles with no detriment whatever to the game of the better players and with much advantage to their own. Besides being in itself a fine help to rising players this method also accustoms them to fight against stronger forces, and when in match play they happen to encounter the superior players they neither feel nor appear ridiculous.

Finally, I would say that most of the French players, even those of the second class possess a game in which can be traced to a large extent the influence of Decugis. I do not know one single player who makes use of the "cut" game. Decugis can be said to be the direct expression of French style.

I will briefly examine our three styles—

that of Decugis, of Laurentz and of my own—and point out the very slight difference which exists between them. Decugis' style is very open, very straight. A most active player on the court, he is capable of taking the very best of strokes if he can reach them, and not only of taking them but of returning them to some purpose. He has no weak spot, except perhaps a tendency to play too much from the base-line, somewhat neglecting the volley. He prefers "working" his adversary well out of position and, when a good occasion presents itself, running up to the net to finish the rally. His high volleying is remarkable, but his low volleys are not so perfect as his ground strokes. Yet he makes good use of them. His backhand shots across court on the side line should perhaps be classed immediately after his smashes in the order of merit of his strokes.

Laurentz differs from Decugis by a marked preference for playing at the net. He possesses a varied and very effective service which allows him to reach in good time a favourable position for volleying. His



ground strokes are also excellent, and it would be hard to find the weak spot in his game. He makes much use of the "lifting drive," and this stroke by its length gives him a very useful attack and allows of his coming up to the net. He is particularly fond of the chop cross-court volley, the difficulties of which he has completely mastered, making use of this stroke on the hardest drives both forehand and backhand. His smashes, although less violent than those of Decugis, are very long and very certain; he places them also more accurately. He is perhaps yet too audacious and cannot always resist the temptation of trying a brilliant shot. Lately he has much improved in this direction, and is day by day steadying down. He makes an excellent partner in doubles and in mixed, seeming particularly fond of this last game. When well on his game he is a marvellous combination of quickness, agility and, at the same time, precision.

On arriving at the description of my own game I find that it is an absolutely im-

possible task. I therefore ask my friend, Anthony Wilding, to kindly fill up this page for me.<sup>1</sup> The only thing I wish to state is that, if for strokes and style I am indebted to my own countrymen, the knowledge I may have of the game was certainly for a great part acquired during my long stay in England last year. I was beaten again and again and felt strongly against those "tricky grass courts," but I encountered every sort and manner of game, and it was a few months after my return to France that I won for the first time the French National Covered Court Championship.

<sup>1</sup> To the reference to Gobert's game which will be found on page 152 I may add that his style has some of the attributes of Decugis and some of Laurentz. His service is infinitely superior to either. Perhaps he sometimes attempts a little too much, and now and then, as we all do, misses easy returns. But at his best he is splendid, equally good at the net or at the back of the court. His tremendous reach is invaluable. I have found him a most difficult player to pass or lob.—A. F. W.

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